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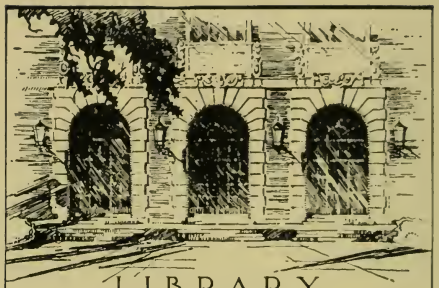

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WHO SHALL BE HEIR?

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"THE PRINCE AND THE PEDLAR," "NAN DARRELL," "THE FRIGHT," "THE QUIET HUSBAND," &c.

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WHO SHALL BE HEIR?

CHAPTER I.

"WHAT can you and mamma be talking of, looking, for all the world, as grave as two rooks debating where to fix their nest, or discussing some tale of scandal in the rookery?" exclaimed Rosalind Trevor, as she threw herself on the green at her father's feet, pushing back the long glossy curls that had fallen over her brow, and glancing up with bewitching archness.

"Our talking concerns your impertinent self," replied Captain Trevor, smiling on the animated questioner.

"Impertinent quotha! as they say in the old books; I pray you, papa, to be a little more precise and correct in your language, since some people consider precision and correctness synonymous with elegance; and I cannot abide vulgarity," cried the laughing girl, drawing herself up with the pretence of offended dignity.

"Am I to conclude that you have an equal dislike to gravity and wisdom, and never intend to enact the woman, Miss Trevor?"

"Fie upon you, papa! to hint such a wicked, unnatural scandal of your own sweet child; the very image of you in every thing, as poor old nurse used to declare, save in eyes, nose, hair, complexion, merry mood, and some few other minor particulars. Gravity indeed! Did not I entertain old Doctor Burns, the learned Grecian, a whole half hour not a week ago,

never laughing but once and then at a Greek joke that I did not understand?"

"Indemnifying yourself for the penance by mimicking his slowness and pomposity after his departure," remarked her father; but Rosalind, taking no notice of his comment, proceeded.

"Then for wisdom!—have not I just used the long word synonymous? Sy-non-y-mous," counting on her fingers. "Four whole syllables I declare! I see I must use words of six or eight before you will think me wise."

"I desire you will do no such thing, Rosalind; I hate hard words and studied phrases. You may be grave and dignified without using terms fit only for L.L.D.'s."

"And A.S.Ses," added his daughter laughing. "Dignity is all very proper in some persons, and on fitting occasions; but I am better suited for comedy than tragedy, as Mr. Rollins discovered when seeking amateur actors for his baby theatre."

"How has this folly ended? I understand that Rollins hopes to obtain my permission for your joining his company as he calls it."

"I have saved you the trouble of saying no, papa; and the weariness of listening to what he would call arguments, by uttering that uncivil monosyllable myself. I may, in the spirit of fun and frolic, talk nonsense enough to compose three modern comedies;—nay, when the merry mood is on me, I may consent to dress up like 'a mime, a mome, a moppet; or even a malthorse,' but then it is only from the impulse of the moment, and among friends or relatives. I am not going to study speeches and attitudes that I may be talked of, stared at, and criticised by strangers; and this I told Mr. Rollins, so you see, papa, I can behave with dignity and decorum on fitting occasions."

"Astonishing dignity I have no doubt. Suppose you exhibit some at the present moment, in listening to what I have to tell you, instead of tying flowers into old Bruno's ears,"

replied her father, vainly endeavouring to look grave as he marked the good tempered old setter blinking under the operation in most ludicrous perplexity.

"Wait one minute, dear papa, and I will be as grave as all the twelve judges in all their twelve wigs; but I must have a chase after that butterfly first," exclaimed the merry Rosalind, springing up from the turf, and bounding away after the beautiful insect, now skimming over the velvet sward with the fleet step of a fawn, then pausing to mark the course of the object of her pursuit, as it soared above her reach, with the net extended in her hand; one eager foot scarce resting on the ground, the classically shaped head thrown gracefully back, and her long raven curls waving gently on the breeze.

It was impossible for fond, we will not say doting parents, to look upon her without pride. Rosalind might be in the opinion of others a little inconsiderate—a little too rash and inde-

pendent—a little too lively in the demonstration of her feelings to suit the code of fashion; but they knew her uprightness and warmth of heart—the depth and delicacy of those feelings—the generosity of her spirit; and as for the graceful quietude of fashion, who, gazing on her at that moment, with the sun glading so picturesquely through the trembling boughs, could have wished her other than she was, so lovely was the face—so strikingly graceful the attitude. The sculptor would have wished her turned to stone as she stood there so full of life and grace:—the painter would have longed to transfer her to his canvass bathed in that flood of golden light:—the poet would have ceased for a time to dream of an ideal beauty, and then thrown his pen aside in disgust from the consciousness that no description could do her justice. And he would have done wisely in so doing. She was no fitting subject for pen and ink; hers was a loveliness to be felt and not described. To rave of a symmetrical

form or lovely face was not to depict Rosalind Trevor as she appeared to those who knew her. Other forms might be as light and rounded—other features far more perfect; but it was the varied grace of her movements, and the constant play of those features that were so enchanting:—the natural grace—the natural play; for there was nothing studied, nothing artificial about Rosalind Trevor. Hers was the gaiety of a light heart that as yet had known no sorrow—the grace of a child that never imagined itself the object of observation.

The father looked at the mother—the mother looked at the father—and then both looked again at the graceful girl, as she bounded after the gaudy butterfly, followed by the fat old setter, panting and puffing as he endeavoured to keep pace with his young mistress.

"I hope we do not love her too much," remarked Captain Trevor at length.

"We cannot do that; she deserves all our

affection," replied his wife, the fond pride of the mother shown in herearnest tones.

"She does indeed; but we must not make her an idol," replied her husband; yet the father's eye followed his lovely child with an admiration that scarcely answered to his words.

"Now, 'most reverend, grave, and potent signors,' please to enlighten me as to the subject matter of your wise deliberations," cried Rosalind some moments after, as she again threw herself on the ground at their feet, glowing and panting from her chase; whilst the puffing, wheezing old setter stretched himself out beside her.

"Do you deserve to have your curiosity gratified, after whisking off in that fashion like a mad cow stung by a gad fly?"

"Ah, papa! if all had their deservings:—but there I will say nothing about that, having pity for tender consciences. And as for calling me a mad cow, I really thought I was only a

silly calf at the worst; and at the best, a very, very good child; at least, I am sure dear old Mr. Handley will call me so. Do you know I have captured for him the very *moral* of the butterfly, as old nurse would have said, that we were pursuing for three long miles the other day."

"Do you mean when you and Mr. Handley fell into the brook together?" observed Mrs. Trevor slily.

"Oh, mamma! to think of reminding me of my misfortunes! Spoiling my favorite dress, and being quite a figure just as young Lennard and Sir Joseph Hawthorn, the two best matches in the county, as prudent mammas inform their daughters, rode up to pay their devoirs."

"Much you care for either of the gentlemen or their fortunes," remarked her mother with a tone in which a very critical ear might have discovered a slight accent of rebuke.

"Not care for them?—Oh what a mistake! I care for them almost as much as for that

whirling leaf. They are very tolerable for partners at a ball, or for an hour of a fine day; but for a whole wet morning—why, in good truth, I would sooner have a German doll at my side, for that would not hint of the last night's cigar; and as it could not talk, would not expect to be talked to. I wish you had seen kind old Mr. Handley standing almost up to his neck in the brook, looking as innocent and surprised as if he had never heard of water salt or fresh, running or stagnant. I lost all my vexation at being seen by the county beaux when dripping like a mermaid, in my mirth at his funny dismay."

"Ah, Rosalind! you have too much of the mischievous in your disposition."

"On the contrary, mamma, I am one of the most demure of mad-caps; but no one could have resisted a laugh at Mr. Handley's look after his unexpected plunge. Besides, did not I help him out as well as I could? And have not I undertaken another three mile chase on

a summer's day to procure him just such a butterfly?"

"And put yourself in such a heat," remarked the anxious mother, pushing back her curls, and feeling her brow, whilst her father enquired the name of the insect.

"A something, something: you do not like me to use hard words you know, papa," replied Rosalind archly. "And now please for your news, as I am dying with curiosity; and so demure!—having worn down my frivolity in the chase. Who seeks me as a sober housekeeper, to order the dinner, add up the bills, scold the servants, look after the linen; and have no will but my husband's?"

"I have heard of no such application—the young men in our neighbourhood bear the character of being sensible and prudent."

"Thank you for the compliment, papa! but I hate prudent, sensible, young men, as the world calls them, all—

"Smoking as they go for want of thought."

"Take care, Rose. What will you say some twenty years hence when verging on old maidism, no one having been found bold enough to encounter that cutting tongue?"

"What a merry old maid I will be!" cried the laughing Rosalind. "With three cats, five dogs, a monkey, a parrot, a cockatoo, and a piping bullfinch that we may have music to dance to, for dance we will. I will teach them all to lounge through a quadrille, whirl in a waltz, or romp in a galopade."

"Is this the gravity and decorum of which you boasted? What will the world say?"

"Oh! the world will say—what a funny old creature! praise my pets to my face, should I have any money to leave; and laugh at my folly behind my back."

"Gossips will add; but no wonder, poor thing!—her parents spoilt her, always letting her have her own way, so most of the blame rests of right with them," remarked Captain Trevor gravely.

"No, no! they will—they shall say no such thing. I will be all you wish me—all that the world requires, rather than that the shadow of blame should rest with you and dear mamma," cried the warm-hearted girl, tears coming into her beautiful eyes as she spoke, so quick, so sensitive was her affection.

Rosalind Trevor would resist a tyrant to the death; but a look, a tone from those she loved could melt her into softness and submission. Her father's caress stayed the tears ere they fell; and again was her mood all sunshine.

"What say you to a visit to Denham, for of such were we discoursing?" observed Captain Trevor to turn the current of her thoughts.

"Has Mrs. Denham given you and mamma an invitation?" enquired Rosalind in some surprise.

"No, my child, nor does she intend it; but I hear it is her purpose to invite you for a visit of some weeks."

"Invite me! I go and spend some weeks with cold, formal, vindictive Mrs. Denham,

who has never forgiven my mother for preferring Captain Trevor, to a richer but stupid suitor, or a dull sojourn with her?—who freezes her guests with her chilling demeanour, and drills all around her into most monotonous uniformity? What evil have I done that I must be put on this adventure? All woman as I am, I would rather encounter a fiery dragon, than spend some weeks alone with Mrs. Denham, of Denham Park. Pray, pray, don't send me if you would not have me frozen or petrified," pleaded Rosalind, holding up her hands in playful horror and entreaty.

"You will not be doomed to a *tête-á-tête* with Mrs. Denham, as Michael and a whole tribe of cousins are to be included in the invitation."

"If Mike will be there to take care of me, I may survive the trial; otherwise, if condemned to endure that awful Mrs. Denham without a protector—"

"You would be none the worse, and might learn to think differently of my old friend; for

we were friends once," remarked Mrs. Trevor rebukingly, closing the sentence with a sigh.

"Ah! once, mamma; and that is just what I quarrel with her for. Why is she not still your friend, if not, as my very handsome and entertaining cousin Edred Cottrell says, because she is rich and you are poor?"

"I do not believe any such thing," replied Mrs. Trevor with unusual quickness. "Sarah Denham did not care for wealth in her younger days, whatever the world might think."

"I did not mean to vex you, dear mamma," observed Rosalind affectionately; "but I had understood that your marrying a poor man instead of a rich one was the cause of Mrs. Denham's estrangement."

"We can only guess the reason; but I believe personal dislike to me had as much or more to do with her resentment than avarice, or any great partiality for a richer suitor," remarked Captain Trevor. "There was a coldness in her manner that chilled, and a jealousy

of my bride's affection that disgusted me, and I believe my comments upon both points were reported to her by some good-natured friends. For myself, I care little for the estrangement, and deem a friendship so lightly withdrawn of paltry worth; but for your sake," he added, turning to his wife, "I would not reject—nay would meet half way any offer of reconciliation: —more I could not do, as my former attempts to propitiate her, undertaken at your request, were so scornfully received. She detests me, and I fear there is little love lost between us."

"Then I detest her back again as a point of filial duty," exclaimed Rosalind warmly, indignant that any one should show slight or dislike to her parents. "She is a cold blooded, vindictive—"

"Hush, Rosalind, hush! you are talking without consideration—letting your quick temper get the better of good feeling," observed Mrs. Trevor reprovingly. "Sarah Denham was not cold blooded when I knew her though

her manner was rather reserved and formal, from the method of her bringing up. She had then as warm a heart as yourself:—her very jealousy showed her possessed of strong affections; and I must ever regret our estrangement, though I would make no further attempt to overcome it, lest she should suspect me of courting her for her wealth."

"If she could suspect you of that she does not deserve your regard; but I will try not to say another word against her, since it vexes you, dear mamma," answered Rosalind taking her mother's hand in hers. "But what can Mrs. Denham mean by inviting only Michael and myself, for Edred Cottrell declares that she never acts without a motive?"

"Few do;" replied Captain Trevor drily. "Do you pin your faith to that rattling Edred Cottrell, who has persuaded your mother to believe that he is her ninth cousin once removed?"

"Only in matters of worldly wisdom, papa

—not in matters of taste or affection; for he had the impertinence to call my pet pony a fright; I had much rather he had called me so."

"Perhaps he did behind your back."

"No, that I am sure he did not."

"You answer promptly and boldly on a point of which you can know little," observed Captain Trevor, whilst Rosalind, conscious of colouring at his remark, endeavoured to turn the conversation by repeating her question as to Mrs. Denham's motive for inviting the children without the parents.

"I suppose I must tell, or you will ferret out the truth as you always do when any thing is kept back."

"To be sure! you must tell me all, dear papa. You know your own Rosalind can keep a secret if trusted," said his daughter coaxingly. "What she ferrets out she considers her own property, wherewith to do what mischief she may fancy."

"I would not vouch so readily for Miss Trevor's talents for secrecy; but let that rest—I will trust her on this occasion."

"Perhaps because you cannot help it, my cautious papa."

"Exactly so;" replied her father smiling.

"If I did not tell you Mrs. Sewell would. Mrs. Denham it appears, anxious to provide a worthy heir for her large possessions, has resolved on collecting her young cousins round her that she may have a choice—near relatives she has none."

"Indeed! So Mike and I are to become candidates for the heirship. Did Mrs. Denham tell you this herself, papa?"

"No; we have not heard from Mrs. Denham, and her invitation is yet to come. Mrs. Sewell kindly forewarned us of her purpose by yesterday's post that we might the better know how to act."

"Kind, considerate Mrs. Sewell. I would wager my pet curl; ay, and my favorite rose

bush to boot, that she is struck with the singular coincidence of our being invited to Denham once during a space of more than twenty years."

Rosalind was right; Mrs. Sewell had marveled at the wonderful coincidence of such an occurrence, and Captain Trevor and his wife could not forbear a smile as the former replied "You may wager your favorite curl without any fear."

"Here comes the postman! Who knows but he may bring the important dispatch!—I will go see," and away bounded Rosalind towards the house.

"Here it is!" she exclaimed, holding up a letter as she returned to her parents.

Mrs. Sewell's information as to Mrs. Denham's intention might be correct, or it might not, as she generally preferred quantity of gossip to quality, and showed little skill in sifting the grains of truth from the chaff of fiction; but whether true or not the letter made no mention of such a purpose. It was brief, and coldly worded, beginning "My dear

Mrs. Trevor," instead of "My dear Rosalind," as in former days; and ending "yours truly." It was an invitation and no more;—not so cold but that it might be accepted—not so warm as to merit gratitude.

"I have little gaiety to offer my guests, but as several young persons, nearly all relatives or connections are coming to spend some weeks at Denham, perhaps Miss Trevor and her brother might like to join the party, in which case, I shall have pleasure in receiving them. If you can fix any day after the sixth of June, I will send the carriage to C. to meet your daughter; and do my best to render the visit agreeable. I was glad to hear from Mrs. Sewell a good account of the health of yourself and Captain Trevor, to whom I beg you to present my compliments,

"Yours truly,

SARAH DENHAM."

muttered Rosalind, running hastily over the letter. "Only compliments to papa, and no-

thing kind to you. I hope you do not wish me to go, mamma."

"Indeed I do, my dear, most earnestly."

"What to try and coax her to make me her heir? Ah do not send me! it would be all in vain. Think of my wild spirits with her formal precision. I should be sent back in disgrace within a week; or perhaps whipped and put in the corner."

"I have no fear of that, Rosalind: you were never wanting in respect to age; and Mrs. Denham is by no means the ogress you would make her out. You have imagined a bug-a-boo—such as should only frighten a child—and are now trembling with fear at the object of your own creation."

"Nay, mamma, even Edred Cottrell is afraid of her."

"Edred Cottrell, like most great talkers, utters a great deal of nonsense."

"And a great deal of sense too; please to admit that, mamma. He is a very entertaining

person, who can pass a whole four and twenty hours without a cigar, and a wet morning without yawning more than thrice. He says Mrs. Denham requires courting, and likes flattery; now I hope I shall never be uncivil to any respectable elderly lady; but as for flattery—you never brought me up for a courtier."

"Edred Cottrell talks wildly; Sarah is changed indeed, if she requires flattery. I do not wish you to be a courtier, Rosalind; I only wish you to be yourself."

"My very own, wild, merry self?" questioned her daughter, looking with bewitching archness into her mother's face.

"Your reasonable self," replied her mother gravely, though she found it difficult to withstand her fascination.

"My reasonable self," repeated Rosalind, shaking her head. "Ah! that is just a little touch of flattery to coax me into good behaviour; but it won't do—I never can be reason-

able for more than a fortnight. Do let me return at the end of that time."

"You forget that your being naughty may prove a disadvantage to Michael."

"Oh, yes! dear Mike! I quite forgot him —so handsome—so good-natured. He shall be Mrs. Denham's heir I am resolved," exclaimed the light-hearted girl, clapping her hands with childish glee. "I will be so civil to the old lady—cram her lapdogs—whistle to her birds—laugh at her prosy stories—and if she should box my ears, endeavour to look all submission and admit that it is for my good."

"What a happy reformation!" observed her father with a smile nearly as arch as his daughter's.

"Do not flatter yourself, my sage papa. Whatever Miss Trevor may be at Denham, she will be as wild as before at Ivy Cottage. I will try and be as demure as that croaking old rook there, up in that elm, instead of skimming about like yon airy swallow; but when I

come back, mind, I am to be your own happy, merry pet again, flitting hither and thither without a cause to mar my peace."

"I hope so," replied her father, a feeling of solemnity, unconsciously, marking his tone, whilst a vague dread of the future, felt but unspoken, clouded his brow.

"You hope so, papa!—to be sure,—why not?"

"You forget the uncertainty of life; long years of happiness should make you grateful not presumptuous," replied her father reverently.

"They should," said Rosalind, raising her eyes to his.

"Besides, you count yourself a woman now; and a woman, with all due respect for the sex, will find or make a thousand troubles that a child would never dream of."

"Oh, yes! but then I intend to be a child woman, or woman child all my life; uniting

the dignity of the one, with the light-heartedness of the other."

Her father laughed.

"As I said before, I hope it may prove so. But do you always expect to rule that light heart at your will?"

"To be sure! it shall be a very slave if I bid it wear a chain. I know what you mean. If mamma were not here, you would say that women are such silly creatures they cannot help having a liking for the very last person on whom they should bestow a thought; and that the course of true love never did run smooth. The lovers say they can live upon love—papas and mammas say they cannot—the lady weeps an ocean of tears—the gentleman raves—then they vow eternal constancy, and part—she to mope for five days and a quarter—he for one and a half. Within the year one has married an heiress, and the other a gentleman with large landed property."

"I thought you had been more sentimental,

Rosalind. Where did you acquire such a matter of fact knowledge of these affairs?" enquired her father, smiling at her whimsical history of love.

"You forget that I was Emily Woodley's confidant."

"And declined being her bride's-maid, indignant at what you termed her unfeeling fickleness," remarked Mrs. Trevor who, having married solely from affection, was rather sensitive to ridicule upon that point.

"Yes, mamma; but that was two years ago, when I was but a silly lassie; I have grown wiser since then, shake your head as you may. I know all about these things now, and never intend to fall in love as Emily called it, I can tell you; it seems more pain than pleasure—more plague than profit."

"A very wise resolution, Rosalind; only keep it," observed her father with a provoking smile of incredulity. "I never knew a girl of nineteen rail against love; but what she made

a fool of herself with some silly puppy within the year."

"Was made a fool of, papa, I suppose you mean; coaxed into believing all the pretty things that gentlemen say on such occasions. Well—well, we shall see!"

"Yes, yes, we shall see!" replied Captain Trevor with a second look as incredulous as the first, of which Rosalind chose to appear unconscious.

"Who are all these countless cousins to whom I am to be introduced, and vow cousinly love?" she enquired turning to her mother. "Since I must encounter them, do pray tell me something about them, that I may not ask some dignified old lady who that fright her daughter is, or inform some dandy that his grandfather kept a grocer's shop."

"One would think you were a gossip, Rosalind."

"So I am, mamma, after a fashion of my own. But do tell me the history of all the

ogres and ogresses to be met at Denham, for, as Mrs. Sewell says, evil reports spread fast and wide, and it is a most singular coincidence that once in every month I repeat to some one particular person, just the very thing which that one particular person would rather not hear."

"I never knew you do so more than twice; but I suppose I must humour you for once."

"For once and always if you please, mamma; I like to be humoured, and petted, and loved, so pray begin directly."

"As you will. First then Mrs. Sewell is to be there."

"Is she? That will be a delightful coincidence. I shall be quite bold then, certain that if Mrs. Denham should diet me for my mind's health on bread and water, eaten in a dark room, good-natured Mrs. Sewell will bring me plum cake and a lantern."

"Dear Rosalind, do try to meet Mrs. Denham without prejudice."

"I will try my very utmost, because it will please you, my own dear mother," said Rosalind affectionately, kissing Mrs. Trevor's hand, which for the last few moments had been playing with her daughter's curls as she reclined at her feet. "That is settled, so please to proceed; I really will be good—if I can."

Mrs. Trevor did not feel assured of Rosalind's freedom from prejudice in regard to Mrs. Denham, but, without giving speech to her doubts on the subject, she continued her catalogue, choosing as the leading article a name that she knew, or at least fancied, would interest Rosalind.

"Edred Cottrell is to be there."

"Good! Good!" cried her daughter in open glee. "Then Denham Park cannot be dull: where he is, there must be mirth and frolic. The list is growing enchanting, and I shall be begging to set off to-morrow."

"He is not to be there till the sixth," remarked Mrs. Trevor, who, not being quite

decided as to whether Rosalind's liking for the young man exceeded cousinly liking, or whether she should approve of him for a son-in-law, felt rather anxious on his account.

Captain Trevor either felt no doubts on the subject, or his mind being less given to dwell on weddings he made no observation; and neither looked troubled nor penetrating.

"Then please not to send me till the seventh, dear mother mine. Who else?"

"Mrs. Weston, with her two sons and daughters."

"The Westons? Oh! now I remember. Mrs. Weston a commonplace, vulgar minded manœuvrer—one son a dandy, or a nothing, if a difference can be admitted between them—the other a linguist, I suppose he must be called, being well versed in the modern language of slang;—one daughter plain, and one a beauty—a real beauty! such as is seen only once in a thousand years—a more precious flower than the aloe. I shall be delighted to look on

Maria Weston; but for the rest—well let them pass—mere pawns around their queen. Any more, mamma?"

"The Baileys, Mrs. Sewell says; but she does not name how many."

"She does right not to waste time in particularising them, they would not make good pen and ink sketches. A stock-jobbing papa, a good natured, not over elegant mamma; gossipping, missy girls; and sons who stand with their backs to the fire, or their faces to a looking-glass pulling up their shirt collars—but the sons are abroad I believe, getting Parisianised or Italianised."

"This is sharp shooting, Rosalind," observed Captain Trevor half smilingly, and half reprovingly, for the characters, as far as he could judge, appeared drawn with wonderful accuracy, save that all verged towards the line of caricature, and showed more spirit than charity. Who told you this?"

"Edred Cottrell."

"He seems to have told you a great many things," observed the anxious mother.

"A very great many things," replied her daughter with a quiet smile. "I know no one who can with so few words depict a character or awaken a feeling."

"It would have been better if he had not tried to set you against your relations," observed Mrs. Trevor in a tone that, for her, sounded almost severe.

"He only gave me the kernels, saving me the trouble of breaking the shells. He cannot help Mrs. Denham's relatives to talent and polish if they have them not; and pray do not condemn him to silence, or he will only be like a hundred other good looking, gentlemanly young men. Any more on your list?"

"Rupert Wyvill."

"Rupert Wyvill! I wish he would stay away," exclaimed Rosalind, colouring with vexation.

"What is the matter with Rupert Wyvill?

What does Edred Cottrell say against him?" enquired Captain Trevor, surprised at her earnestness.

"A thousand things! he calls him a pedant —a critic—a cynic—a cold friend—a calculating man of the world—an undutiful son, rarely seeing his father—a miser, not spending half his income."

"These are heavy charges, Rosalind; and should not have been lightly made. Edred Cottrell is somewhat too quick of speech; and for the sake of Wyvill's mother, who was my playfellow in by-gone days, I will hope that he has been guilty of exaggeration. You met the young man at the Woodleys did you not."

"Yes, more than two years ago."

"What is your opinion of him?"

"Oh! he does not like me, and I do not like him," replied Rosalind hastily.

"Ha! ha! ha! Now the murder is out," cried Captain Trevor, laughing at her pettish tone. "He affronted your dignity I suppose

by treating you as a girl, when you chose to consider yourself a woman."

"He was silent and stupid," answered Rosalind evasively.

"Stop! I must hear the history of this offence to your pinafore," said Captain Trevor, detaining his daughter, who would have risen.

"He said nothing disrespectful of my pinafore."

"Then what did he say, Rose, for I will hear despite blushes and evasions?"

"Well then, if the murder must out, he called me a romp," replied his daughter, colouring crimson from vexation, a vexation not diminished by her father's mischievous laugh, and her mother's smile.

"That was a heinous and unpardonable offence. Shall I call him out, Rose?"

"No, papa; but I am not a romp."

"Umph! There may be two opinions on that point. Chasing butterflies, and tumbling into brooks look something like it."

"I was not chasing butterflies then, only playing with little Harry Woodley; and I stopped the moment I found that the gentlemen were looking at me."

"The stopping looks suspicious, and Wyvill, by your own showing, seems to have spoken truth."

"No, no, papa; I am not a romp—at least, not a common romp."

"There I agree with you—a very uncommon romp decidedly. I daresay young Wyvill will admit thus much;—suppose you ask him."

"I shall not ask him anything. But you will not understand me; I mean I was more than a romp, and if to please the children, or even myself, I did sometimes run about like a wild colt, I could have also played the woman had he deigned to treat me as such; and given a sensible answer, had he condescended to address me."

"Did he never address you then?"

"Yes, once, when compelled to sit beside

me, he asked if I liked 'The Evenings at home,' and 'The Children's Friend?'"

"And what did you say in reply?"

"Talked with childish delight of 'The Transmigrations of Indur,' 'Little Jack,' 'The Sword,' and 'The children who would be their own masters,' ending with an eloquent eulogium on Blindman's Buff, and Puss in the Corner."

"Thereby confirming his opinion of your childishness. He is acquitted of prejudice and want of judgment on the very evidence brought against him."

"May be—may be not, papa; at any rate, he has little penetration. Edred Cottrell saw at once what lay beneath the surface."

"Edred Cottrell seems a paragon of perfection in your eyes."

"Oh, dear no! But I do not like Mr. Wyvill—that is poz."

"Why dislike him more than some others,

who have failed in lauding you as a model of womanly wisdom and dignity?"

"I cannot tell; but I am certainly more vexed with him than with any one else."

"Is he handsome?"

"Oh, dear no!"

"Ugly?"

"No, even I cannot say that he is ugly; but I think he ought to be."

"Think he ought to be ugly! What do you mean? Because he called you a romp?"

"No, no; but his features are not regular; and yet there is a something about him that prevents one calling him ugly; and makes one think more of him than of most others present. An air, not exactly of defiance, or pride, or self-conceit, or fashion; but a something that compels respect. An air of power—that is it!" cried Rosalind triumphantly, thinking she had found the proper word.

"A very luminous description truly," observed her father laughing.

"That is, a very silly one you mean. Well, I daresay it is very silly; and still more so my being vexed at his remark, so I will try and forgive him:—but I may take a little revenge, playful revenge, first—may I not? He shall just find that I am a woman, by—"

"Your tongue," added her father interrupting her. "If you intend to attack him with that weapon, I pity him, poor fellow; better endure the ants and musquitoes of other lands."

"For shame, papa! Mamma, why do not you defend your own sex?"

"You have so much more zeal in the cause that I leave it to you."

"No, no; my sex deserves a worthier champion."

"That is you mean requires a stronger one," observed Captain Trevor.

"Exactly so; to withstand the furious attacks of its furious assailants, who pay no heed to the laws of chivalry as to equal arms and

equal power. That is for your sex, papa. On reconsidering the matter, I am glad that Mr. Wyvill is to be at Denham, because, when out of humour with others or myself, I can run a tilt with him, and thus vent my vexation in an innocent way. What with quarrelling with him—talking of coincidences to Mrs. Sewell—admiring Maria Weston—laughing with Edred Cottrell—and playing pretty and demure to Mrs. Denham, I shall find or make myself amusement for some days."

"Which purpose do you think will be the best fulfilled?" enquired Captain Trevor.

"Quarrelling with Mr. Wyvill, or laughing with Edred Cottrell;—not playing pretty and demure to Mrs. Denham, which is what you intend to insinuate, I know."

"But, my dear Rosalind, I do hope—" began Mrs. Trevor in an earnest tone.

"So do I, my dear mamma; nay, I am quite sure that I shall ever bear in mind your wishes; and rest assured, in spite of all my seeming

wilfulness, that Mrs. Denham shall have no reasonable cause of complaint against your daughter," said Rosalind springing up, and flinging her arms round her mother's neck. "One kiss, mamma, to seal the bond. There now feel certain that I shall be very good, or rather make the others as wicked as myself, that my own delinquencies may pass unremarked. I suppose you must have kiss too, papa, or you will be jealous."

"Not I, indeed," replied her father.

"Oh, fie, papa! never tell stories."

"Get away with you, Miss Impudence," cried Captain Trevor, as she threw her arms round his neck, as she had done round her mother's;—yet he held her to him, instead of putting her aside.

"There now I am away for the top of the hill to see the sun in his robes of crimson blent with gold, ere he sink to rest beneath his purple canopy. Come along, Bruno! a run up the steep will do you good—mend your breath,"

cried Rosalind gaily, kissing her hand to her parents.

"Old Bruno is of a different opinion," observed Captain Trevor, as the old dog, after waddling some steps, turned back with a knowing looking on perceiving the course taken by his young mistress, and old play-fellow;—he had lost all wish to climb.

"Rosalind is right; she is not a mere romp, and Mr. Wyvill should have seen this," observed Mrs. Trevor, gazing after her daughter.

"Poor Wyvill! two women on his back at once—I pity him!" replied her husband, amused at the mother's pique.

"But do you not agree with me?"

"Yes, Rosalind is not a mere romp; but I sometimes doubt whether we have not petted her into wilfulness; and done wrong in leaving her high spirits to be checked by experience, rather than warning."

"Rosalind is not wilful—only playful; and her gaiety is so bewitching," pleaded the fond

mother. "She takes after you in her buoyant spirits, and energy of character."

"Perhaps it would be better if she had more of her mother's quietude, but I suppose after your sweet flattery of her being like me, I must declare her to be irresistible," replied Captain Trevor with a smile, that despite growing wrinkles and grey hairs had much of the brightness of his youth.

"You cannot deny her powers of fascination."

"I have no wish to do so; but remember others see her with less partial eyes."

"And Michael is a fine, handsome young man, with very pleasing manners," pursued Mrs. Trevor.

"Exactly so, my dear; he takes after his mother. Lucky for me that you have no more children to praise."

"Sarah must be pleased with them," remarked Mrs. Trevor looking a little anxiously at her husband for his reply;—that reply was

only an emphatic—Umph! "We have not much to leave them," she continued after a short pause.

"Certainly not, as my pension of course dies with me; you acted unwisely in marrying against Mrs. Denham's wishes a captain of foot with more wounds than money. Had you yielded to her persuasions, you might have been living with her in splendour—a happier fate perhaps than nursing a worn out soldier."

"You do not believe that I think so," replied Mrs. Trevor with reproachful tenderness. "I have never regretted my choice, though I must ever mourn my estrangement from my early friend."

"Forgive me, Rosalind; I spoke pettishly," said Captain Trevor, drawing his gentle wife towards him. "You have been a greater blessing to me than words can tell; but Mrs. Denham was jealous of me in former days, and now I am sometimes jealous of her."

"You should not feel this, Trevor."

"I know I should not, sweet wife; but we do not always do as we should."

"The children shall not go if their going will cause you one moment's uneasiness," observed Mrs. Trevor earnestly.

"And you would give up this visit, which you so much desire, without a murmur to please me? This is kind indeed, Rosalind. No, no, they shall go; and if Mrs. Denham will but put out the tip of her little finger in token of amity she shall have a cordial grasp in return. All for your sake though, mind, sweet wife."

"Thank you! thank you! I chose most wisely in preferring you to Sarah Denham," replied Mrs. Trevor with a grateful smile. "But I should like to know that Michael and Rosalind would be well provided for at our death."

"So should I, my dear, though my imagination has not run the length of yours in fancying one or other the possessor of Denham Park."

"They are as nearly related to Sarah as her other cousins; and they would spend riches well," replied Mrs. Trevor deprecatingly, to save the utter demolition of her airy castle.

"I will be bondsman for none on that point: Rosalind has energy enough to wrestle with adverse fortune, unless her affections should take arms against her; and then the struggle would be fearful. But here she comes, and at a slower pace than she departed. Well, Rose, what dress does the sun wear this evening?—what robes will he wear to-morrow?"

"He sets in a golden mist to-night, sad if not sullen, as though he would say nothing of the morrow—perchance lest it should grieve us. I wish it had been a brighter sunset. This unfathomable haze has made me melancholy and sentimental."

"Melancholy and sentimental, Rose! why you will fall in love next, notwithstanding your protestations to the contrary—these are preparatives."

"No such thing, papa; I was not thinking of two legged creatures, who wear hats and coats, and talk nonsense; but of all my pretty flowers here, that will have no one when I am away, to tell them how lovely they are."

"Do you think it needful for young ladies to be told that as well as flowers?"

"No, we have all vanity enough for the matter of that. But you and mamma will never know what to do without me;—and the poor flowers—"

"Will blow quite as well without your praises, as with them; and we shall lead a far more peaceful life."

"But not half as happy a one," cried Rosalind, pouting her pretty lip.

"You may learn to love other persons and flowers more than those you leave behind."

"Never!" exclaimed Rosalind indignantly.

"Never is a rash word from young lips."

CHAPTER II.

"GIVE mamma six kisses for me. Mind you deliver them all, and keep none for yourself," cried Rosalind, favoring her father with a most affectionate hug, as they stood together in the best room, at the best inn at C., making their last adieux, ere she entered the carriage which was waiting at the door to convey her to Denham Park. "I may cry the first five miles of my journey, may I not?"

"If you have ascertained that Mrs. Denham has a taste for red eyes," replied her father gravely. "What would your mother say?"

"There then; I will be so good—only shedding one pearly drop at every milestone," said Rosalind, smiling through her tears. "One more hug and kiss before we go down stairs, lest the landlady and waiters should copy my peculiar style of performing those ceremonies. You know I was never more than eight miles away from you and mamma before; and really feel as if I were going into exile. There, that is all for yourself," giving him a last kiss, "and now see with what dignity I can descend and enter the carriage."

"What a respectable set out!" observed a gentleman standing near.

"The young lady included, of course he means; that comes of the dignity of my manner," whispered Rosalind to her father as he stood with his hand on the chariot door after it had been closed, almost as reluctant as his daughter to speak the last farewell.

"I doubt your being included, Rosalind."

"So do I, on second thoughts. I am too

slight to be respectable: however I have now learnt in what respectability consists—namely, a substantial carriage—and sufficiently fat horses, footman, and coachman. I shall become quite learned in the ways of the world at last. Please to grow a little fatter by the time I return, papa, or I shall be obliged to cut the acquaintance: you are of a most suspicious spareness at present."

"I will do my best," replied her father with a smile. "God bless you, my child," he added earnestly; "keep you from all evil, and send you back with as light a heart."

Rosalind did not speak; but she pressed her lips to her father's brow, and a tear fell on his face.

He stepped back—the carriage drove on—and Rosalind went on her way to Denham, whilst Captain Trevor returned to Ivy Cottage.

"I must not cry," said Rosalind to herself, roused to a consciousness that she was weeping, by feeling the tears on her hand: so she

wiped her eyes, and looked resolutely out of the window, endeavouring to find amusement in the objects she was passing.

Two merry, romping children by the road side brought Rupert Wyvill to her mind; and his derogatory opinion of herself. That the adjective beautiful had been appended to romp, had not been considered of sufficient importance to be reported to her parents, as it had not in the least lessened her vexation at the time.

"He may find that I am more than a romp," was her closing reflection. Then she thought of Mrs. Denham longer and more anxiously; and, in spite of her intention to judge her without prejudice, unconsciously determined in her own mind that she could not like her; and in accordance with this involuntary determination passed judgment on all she saw.

"An extensive park—a fine avenue—a handsome house—every thing kept in good order, and not looking quite as gloomy as I had ex-

pected; but then the sun is shining, and all things look bright in sunshine," thought Rosalind as she approached the mansion, which stood on the summit of a gentle aclivity.

The house was built round three sides of a square; and the space within the walls occupied by a broad gravel road, and a well swept lawn with an antique sundial in the centre. From wing to wing stretched a handsome iron railing rather elaborately wrought, containing two heavy gates which stood hospitably open. Lines of casements ran along the whole range of building, whilst a row of projecting windows adorned the sloping roof. Stacks of highly ornamented chimneys stood gracefully out against the clear blue sky; and the family arms, skilfully cut in stone, served for an entablature above the massive door. Time had given a rich and mellow hue to the building, but let the eye rest where it would there was no symptom of decay. It was evident that the owner had a quick eye and ready hand: and if

there were no modern improvements, neither were there any ancient blemishes. All was in good repair and good order; such good order that Rosalind, who was not in a mood to judge fairly, fancied it formality, and involuntarily sat more erect.

She had been longing during the last half hour to arrive at the termination of her journey, and now she would have sacrificed the tip of her little finger to have deferred that arrival for the same period. She was going to meet Mrs. Denham, the formal owner of this formal looking mansion, the worthy descendant of a long line of dignified ancestors in stiff dresses, and stiffer demeanour, as Edred Cottrell asserted—the unfriendly friend of former days, who had cherished vindictive feelings against her parents for more than twenty years; and she was going to meet her too surrounded by strangers, and without the protection of her brother's presence, who was detained in the west by military business. The first interview must be embar-

rassing, something approaching to awful she thought; and yet Rosalind was no coward, and rarely stood in awe of any. Had she met Mrs. Denham under other circumstances her feelings would have been different; but she knew her mother cherished the hope that her children might be the means of bringing about the reconciliation which she so much desired, and become the chosen heirs; and she feared by some sudden ebullition to destroy this hope, and mar her brother's fortunes; and this idea made her own manner cold and constrained instead of frank and warm as usual. She felt herself growing stiff from the dread of meeting stiffness in another; and turned pale as the carriage drove up to the door, whilst the bell sounded in her ears hollow and alarming.

She followed the butler, a person of dimensions as respectable as the footman and coachman, across the stately hall with a timid, noiseless step into a large drawing room, richly yet heavily furnished in a by-gone taste; but no

Mrs. Denham bade her welcome. She was out in the garden—the servant supposed; and thither he ushered the guest.

Immediately in front of the drawing room extended a gravel terrace, then a slope of greensward; and below a lawn interspersed with flower beds, and backed by a shrubbery, blending into a more distant wood.

Rosalind was not sorry for the brief delay, and better pleased that the introduction should take place on the sunny lawn than in the large apartment through which she had passed; and which, to her fancy, had a chilling feel even in this bright summer day. She allowed the servant to precede her several steps, thus gaining time to criticise Mrs. Denham, as that lady, leaving the persons grouped around her, came forward to receive her guests. Fear always exaggerates: Mrs. Denham was neither as tall, nor as stately, nor as sour looking as she had been pictured in Rosalind's mind. She was a neatly dressed woman of about sixty

years of age, neither tall nor short, neither fat nor thin, neither handsome nor ugly. The features were tolerably formed; but they were immoveable features—stereotyped—there was no play in them. The lips were compressed as if they could not or would not open into a smile; and the very pupils of the eyes appeared without the power of contraction or dilation. There was no mark of a frown on that smooth broad brow—she was not stern; but she was cold, unsympathising. She did not frighten—but she chilled. She was not awful enough to be feared, not kind enough to be loved. The only thing about her which could render her worthy of being the heroine of the romances that Rosalind had been weaving in her own mind for the last ten days, was the excess of her quietude and coldness. Had she been created with too little feeling—or with too much? There was the question. Was this now habitual, freezing demeanour the work of nature, or of art? Was she thus fashioned from her

birth, or by the power of a determined will? Mrs. Trevor had talked of a warm heart, where was a symptom of it? Not in her reception of the child of her early friend.

She was polite—scrupulously polite. Hoped the carriage had been at C. in time—hoped Rosalind had had a pleasant journey—hoped she had left her parents well—was rejoiced to find that all this had been the case:—hoped she would find pleasure from her visit to Denham—nay, she even held out a hand as she said she was glad to see her, but then her fingers remained stiff and unbending, instead of closing over the hand that met hers, and all these things were uttered in an unchanging, and as it seemed a studied tone. Of course this was not lost on the sensitive Rosalind, and her own manner involuntarily caught the hue of her companion's. Her smiling lips grew more compressed—her sentences became more measured; and her answers as brief as politeness would allow. But not long did this metamor-

phosis continue; before Mrs. Denham had said all that as hostess she appeared to consider herself called upon to say, their colloquy was interrupted, and most agreeably in Rosalind's opinion, by the abrupt approach of Edred Cottrell, who greeted his cousin with almost extravagant warmth. For the instant Mrs. Denham with all her formality was forgotten; and Rosalind was again the frank and lively girl—the life of Ivy Cottage.

"I am delighted, enchanted, enraptured, at beholding you again, fair coz!" he exclaimed raising her hand with playful gallantry to his lips. "And seeing you here too, where I had never dared to anticipate such a pleasure!—How could you win your parents' consent? But it is folly to ask that question, for who can resist you if set on gaining a point?—

> "Your witching smiles,
> And still more witching words and wiles,"

who can gainsay them? You must never coax me to remove those ancient lions, bristling in

stone, nor those antique vases, nor those magnificent yew trees, nor any other of Mrs. Denham's pets, which you call horrors, formalities, and monstrosities; for I could not resist your spells; and Mrs. Denham would never forgive me for the sacrilege."

"You need be under no alarm," said Rosalind, laughing at the look of terror he assumed. "I am far too conscientious to meddle with other people's property—too polite to wish to interfere with their tastes; and perfectly innocent of the spells of which you speak. You are all in the wrong; my mother was much pleased with the idea of my visit to Denham."

"Ah! your mother; but Captain Trevor."

"His wishes coincided with hers."

"Indeed! Then you were the coaxed, not the coaxer. From something that occurred when I was last at Ivy Cottage, I fancied your acceptance of Mrs. Denham's kind invitation out of the chapter of possibilities; nay, so convinced was I of this that I absolutely betted a

whole silver sixpence on your declining it with Mrs. Sewell, notwithstanding many inuendoes on her part, about prudent considerations, present circumstances, future hopes, &c., &c. I am such a rattle-brain myself, that, unfortunately, I never comprehend the consequence of these prudent considerations, and lookings forward to the future; better for me if I did, for I am always getting into scrapes. I wish you would teach me how to act on calculation instead of impulse, my prudent cousin. You owe me some reparation for causing me the loss of sixpence."

"Not I, indeed; you deserve your loss for the impertinence of making me the subject of a bet; and it ought to be trebled for your covert satire in asking me to instruct you how to act on calculation, knowing as you do, that the wisdom of consideration is the text of all the discourses preached to my impatient ears."

"Yes Captain and Mrs Trevor are capital hands at that: I remember I came in for one

or two broad hints on the subject; and I suppose on the prospect of your visiting Denham for the first time those discourses increased to a Cromwellian length. I prophesy that your tutors will have cause to be proud of their pupil. All your words and acts, whilst really based on thought, appear so completely the effect of mere impulse, that your hearers are carried on in the course you desire without a suspicion of being led. Deep thought, and deep calculation may be combined with gaiety —even exuberant gaiety :—I see that now, and shall do my best to engraft them on the wild briar of my merriment."

"A wild briar sort of merriment indeed, waving hither and thither as the breeze blows; and somewhat prickly too, catching at all within its reach," answered Rosalind amused at his whimsical comparison, yet wondering at the turn he had given to the conversation. "Be careful in your selection of a graft, and exercise more penetration in that than you have

shown in accusing me of basing all my words and acts on previous thought."

"Accusing you, Miss Trevor?—I praise you highly."

"Woe is me! every one thinks himself justified in laughing at my thoughtlessness. You cousin, who dubbed yourself my champion at Ivy cottage, might have spared me this satirical charge. I have promised to be very good and reasonable for the future, and really do intend to look before I leap."

"There now, did not I say so? Did not I discover it from your thoughtful manner of walking across the lawn? It was no satirical charge: your own confessions confirm my words. Do they not, Mrs. Denham?" exclaimed Edred Cottrell, appealing to his hostess.

"So it seems," replied that lady, with an intonation that was not pleasing.

"Woe is me! I say," he continued. "There was I anticipating such delightful romps—no not romps—plays with you—songs on the lake

—long rambles through the woods—impromptu songs and rambles, running out when the fancy or the sunshine came; and now you will always be pacing soberly up and down this stately terrace with Mrs. Denham, looking as if you had been drilled into marching order, and could not bound over the turf like a greyhound. Think of my most wild, but most bewitching cousin Rosalind, being transformed into a calculating machine, by the preachment of long discourses touching prudence, consideration, looking to the main chance, &c., &c."

"And very proper too," observed Mrs. Sewell coming up to welcome her young favorite. "I always said that Rosalind Trevor had excellent sense under her gaiety; and that she only wanted a little talking to, and mingling with the world, to become prudent and thoughtful. She is a woman now, and has learnt to consider before she speaks."

"Thanks for your singularly good opinion of me," replied Rosalind smiling at Mrs.

Sewell's equivocal praise. "I suppose you and Mr. Cottrell hope by making me believe myself good to induce me to become so; but I am afraid it will be found 'Love's Labour lost.' I never could calculate consequences; and I fear never shall. Thoughtless I was born, and thoughtless I shall remain: and as for weighing my words—"

"I am sure you are not at all thoughtless when you will but just take time to think; on the contrary, I consider you very prudent and reasonable," interrupted Mrs. Sewell, frowning and making signs to Rosalind not to contradict her; but the gestures and faces of the old lady were so very ludicrous that Rosalind's merry mood prevailed; and, totally forgetful of Mrs. Denham, she began a more violent disclaimer to the increasing distress and vexation of her ancient friend.

"Consider me prudent and reasonable, my dear Mrs. Sewell!—Ah! that arises from your overweening partiality, for I was never either

one or the other; and my humility will not allow me to appropriate praises so far beyond my merits; you know very well that I was always heedless, wilful, and—"

"No such thing! Your mother has a high opinion of your judgment; and when you wish to please any particular person you can be very obedient and obliging," again interposed Mrs. Sewell, frowning more warning frowns, and using still more violent and ridiculous gesticulations to induce an acquiescence in her commendations.

Rosalind more and more amused by the old lady's increasing earnestness was on the point of uttering some further confession of evil tempers, when she accidentally caught sight of Mrs. Denham's countenance. Her mirth was checked in a moment, though Edred's laugh still rang in her ears, as he mimicked Mrs. Sewell's nods and becks.

"Mrs. Denham's features were not quite as immoveable and expressionless as they had at

first appeared. Was there not a look of displeasure, almost disgust, with a mingling of disappointment as she observed Mrs. Sewell's signs and frowns? The feeling was not strongly marked, but to Rosalind's quick perception the expression was not doubtful, and the thought of an instant told her that the whole of the conversation since her arrival had been calculated to convey the impression that hopes of pecuniary advantage had induced her parents and herself to accept the coldly worded invitation; and that she had been tutored, from the same mercenary motives, to control her girlish spirits, and adapt herself to the humours of her hostess;—in plain terms, that she had been instructed to cringe and fawn for the chance of becoming the possessor of Denham Park. Unluckily the quick perception that enabled her to comprehend her position rather embarrassed than aided her in getting out of the difficulty. She wished to convince Mrs Denham that she was no wily fortune seeker, but

as no such charge had been brought against her it was a subject that required the most delicate handling; and even had she been so charged roundly and openly, what could she have said in reply? Had she not at first been most reluctant to accept the invitation; and had not that reluctance been partly overcome by the hope of winning the heirship, if not for herself, yet for her brother? And had not her mother more than once entreated her to tame her overflowing spirits into accordance with Mrs. Denham's formality? How then could she deny that the motive of her visit was an interested motive? True, her mother's principal anxiety was a reconciliation with the friend of her youth, but still the heirship of Denham had been thought of, and even named.

Her conscience was not clear;—she coloured from shame and vexation—began one sentence, then another; and finally was silent, her awkward embarrassment increased by the consciousness that Mrs. Denham's eye was on her.

She was convinced that Mrs. Denham considered her an adept in duplicity; but how was she to correct this exaggerated idea? She could not relate the whole of the conversation with her parents on the subject without some allusion being made to Mrs. Denham's suspicions;—or if she could, would she have been acquitted by that relation? Would she not rather have been condemned by her own words? How could she expect to gain belief for the purity of her motives? Her delicacy was pained—her lofty spirit hurt at such degrading suspicions:—the knowledge that she was looking foolish made her look more foolish still; and though aware that her wisest plan would be to continue her former playful conversation till she could give it the turn she desired, yet, after one or two broken sentences, she stopped abruptly and stood looking on the ground abashed and silent. For the first time she agreed with her parents that Edred Cottrell, the lively, the amusing Edred Cottrell, could talk wildly; and by his

thoughtless gaiety and heedless speech embarrass others.

To heighten her annoyance, Mrs. Sewell continued her injudicious and extravagant eulogiums in which Edred cordially joined, making them more ridiculous by his comments upon them, and more confirmatory of Mrs. Denham's preconceived opinion of the cause of Rosalind's sudden thoughtfulness.

"Your affection for my mother and myself, Mrs. Sewell, is running away with you," remarked poor Rosalind at last, provoked beyond endurance. "Pray let me give some proof of wisdom before you proclaim me a Solomon."

"Not a Solomon exactly, my dear; he was a man, and men are always wiser than women; but a siugularly prudent, sensible girl, with a vast deal of forethought. Do you not agree with me, Mrs. Denham, from what you have already seen of my young friend?"

"I entertain no doubt of Miss Trevor's sense and forethought," replied Mrs. Denham

with a slight emphasis, as Rosalind fancied, on the last word.

"Not exactly a Solomon, Mrs. Sewell?—it is a scandal to say so," exclaimed Edred Cottrell gaily. "Why my cousin could twist the Queen of Sheba round her fingers I doubt not, quite as cleverly as that mighty monarch himself. I maintain that Miss Trevor has the prescience of the politician, and the wisdom of the philosopher, united to the wit of the woman, and the playful graces of childhood; which last she wears as a veil to conceal her depth of thought from the simple and timid. Do you not agree with me! Mrs. Denham?"

"It is most probable that I shall when I have had the honor of a longer acquaintance with Miss Trevor," answered that lady, her formally constructed sentence and measured tone, contrasting strongly with the appealer's off-hand style of conversation.

"That I am sure you will, my dear Mrs. Denham: a greater knowledge of Miss Trevor

will prove her to be exactly what I have described. Nothing like going the totality of the creature for one's friends," he added in an audible aside to his blushing cousin.

"This is going the totality of the creature, indeed!" thought poor Rosalind, as she marked the impression made by his words on her formal hostess, rooting up every germ of good will, and scattering the seeds of suspicion and distrust. What mischief thoughtless words, and injudicious friends may do!

To utter more disclaimers would have been worse than useless. She was like one in a bog —the more she attempted to get out the deeper she sank—the awkward endeavours of her friends to assist her only increasing her danger. The more warmly she denied the possession of prudence and forethought, the more prudent and thoughtful did Mrs. Sewell and Edred Cottrell assert her to be—the more she endeavoured to remove Mrs. Denham's suspicions, the lower she sank in her estimation; and

it was a great relief when the approach of others broke off the conversation. The customary introductions took place—the customary pretty things were said, about the pleasure of meeting, &c., &c., and then, the first bell having rung during the round of polite speeches, the guest dispersed to dress for dinner.

Amid the bustle of so many introductions, for Mrs. Denham kept up the good old fashion of introducing, Rosalind had had no time to remark that he against whom she had declared "war to the knife," was not there. She had seen and heard nothing of Rupert Wyvill; but her vexation had prevented her bestowing a thought on him or the cause of his absence.

CHAPTER III.

"I am come to dress you, my dear, instead of my maid, that I may have a little chat with you; and give you some hints," said Mrs. Sewell, entering Rosalind's room some minutes before the ringing of the second bell.

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Sewell; but let me first entreat you not to allow your partiality for me to induce you to praise me to others so very extravagantly; particularly before my face, endowing me with qualities, which you well know I do not possess," replied Rosalind glad of an opportunity of speaking to her affectio-

nate, but most injudicious friend, before she should again encounter the dreaded Mrs. Denham. "You must be aware that want of consideration, and a habit of acting from impulse have ever been among my most glaring faults."

"Well, my dear, what if I do know it myself, that is no reason why I should acknowledge it to others, and more especially to Mrs. Denham, who, though a very worthy woman, is particular; and makes rather a fuss about prudence, and thought, and all that sort of thing. It is a singular coincidence, that, after spending so much time with Mrs. Denham for nearly fifty years, I should be here on your first visit."

"A very singular coincidence indeed," replied Rosalind suppressing a smile.

"Yes, my dear, a very singular coincidence indeed! and providentially arranged, I have no doubt, that I may aid you by my advice to win Mrs. Denham's favor. I wrote your mother word, as I suppose you know, that she has invited all her nearest relatives for the purpose

of choosing an heir; and this is why I rejoice in my presence, since you are so thoughtless as to require guidance; you never will consider consequences."

"There it is, Mrs. Sewell; you admit me to be thoughtless now after denying it to Mrs. Denham, and making me out an epitome of prudence and consideration."

"To be sure, Rosa; did not I say so just this minute? I was not going to allow you to be thoughtless before Mrs. Denham, when I know she thinks so much about thought in young people."

"You meant it kindly, Mrs. Sewell, I know that; but I wish no one to think me other than I am, and value truth above every thing else."

"That is all very right, Rosalind; and I am sure so do I; but there is no harm in praising a friend for her good."

"There is harm in saying the thing which is not; and, setting aside the deviation from truth, your praises only did mischief."

"Mischief, Rosalind!—what mischief? Did not Mrs. Denham believe me and that merry, kind hearted Edred Cottrell, when we vouched for your prudence and forethought?"

"She did, Mrs. Sewell; and what greater mischief could my most vindictive foe have done? Does she not believe that I came hither solely from interested motives, looking for an inheritance? Does she not think that, instead of the frank and thoughtless girl speaking from impulse and feeling, I am changed into the manœuvring woman, speaking and acting from calculation? It is the first time that I was ever suspected of mercenary views, and I would rather have lost my right hand than have been so suspected now," exclaimed Rosalind bitterly.

"Nonsense, my dear, nonsense! I understand these things better than you. What harm is there in doing all you can to please Mrs. Denham? She must leave her property to some one; and why not to you or your

brother, as well as to others? Besides, what did you come for, if it was not to try your fortune?"

"I did not come to try my fortune, Mrs. Sewell;—at least, not wholly and solely," added Rosalind a little less proudly, as a consciousness of the mingling of interested motives shot across her mind. "I came at my mother's earnest desire in the hope that the acceptance of this invitation might lead to the reconciliation between herself and her old friend which she has so much at heart. I would rather have staid away—I dreaded Mrs. Denham's reserve and formality; and expressly warned my mother that she must not expect me to become the heiress, for that I was too wild and wilful to play the courtier."

"She did very right to insist on your coming; only I wish she had persuaded you to leave your wildness and wilfulness at home," observed Mrs. Sewell pettishly, vexed at Rosa-

lind's indignation, which she could not comprehend.

"And what if she did? and what if I promised to do all I could to remove this painful estrangement, or at least not to widen it, her motive was affection for her old friend, not a desire to possess her gold. And if the thought that I should like Michael to possess Denham Park did come into my head as I passed up the avenue, I never intended to promote his interests by flattery or falsehood; and I scorn myself that the idea of profit, even though only for another, crossed my mind, and perhaps, unknown to myself, influenced my manner."

"You need not worry yourself about that, my dear, your manner was by no means too submissive and respectful; and as for all these high, romantic notions of not thinking of profit for yourself or brother, they are all nonsense, and only prove that you know nothing of the ways of the world. You will never get on with such ideas as those."

"I do not wish to get on, Mrs. Sewell. I have every thing I wish for on earth, and envy no one their superior wealth and station."

"No, my dear, I know that; you are too kind hearted to envy any one; but your brother's allowance is small, and nearly all your father's savings, and they can be but little, have gone to buy his commission. But you need not look so proud and vexed, I daresay Mrs. Denham does not suspect you of looking after a legacy; and she agreed with all my praises as you heard."

"Yes! but how did she agree with them? She has already set me down in her own mind as a fawner and flatterer."

"Well my dear, there is no great harm in a little flattery, all people like it; and my old friend among the number."

"We may say there is no harm in any thing, till we gloss over the greatest crimes; but there is harm, and shame, and degradation too in flattering for a fortune; and even should Mrs.

Denham accept the flattery, she would despise the flatterer. I read contempt in her tone when replying to you and Edred Cottrell."

"That is your fancy, my dear; she always speaks in that way."

"It is no fancy," replied Rosalind sadly.

"It must have been, for every one agrees that Mrs. Denham sees little, and shows less. She is generally considered cold and reserved, and some people object to her manner, calling it formal; but I think it a very quiet, ladylike manner; and she is always ready to aid those who need her assistance."

"Is she?" observed Rosalind a little incredulously, for she could not fancy Mrs. Denham sympathising with the afflicted.

"To be sure she is, my dear; only she does not make a fuss about these things as some people do; so because she does not utter fine speeches, and say I am very sorry—and I am very glad—and I hope you are better—and all that sort of nonsense—her bounty is not prized

as it should be. I understand this manner and prefer it to all that palavering politeness; it is more dignified—more fitting her station, being such a large landed proprietess."

"She is very dignified," observed Rosalind in the same dry tone as before.

"And very amiable too, I can assure you."

"A very loveable person, I daresay, Mrs. Sewell."

"Then thinking that, Rosalind, I hope you will try to please her."

"I would much rather try to displease her," replied Rosalind abruptly. "I have a great mind to go to her at once, tell her that she has wronged me by her suspicions, and return this very night to Ivy Cottage. Dear, happy, Ivy Cottage! I wish I had never left it. I cannot bear to stay here another moment, knowing what she thinks of me."

"My dear Rosalind! my sweet child! you must not go—you shall not go," exclaimed poor Mrs. Sewell, placing herself before the

door. "And pray speak very softly, for these rooms being in suites you can hear whole conversations through the connecting doors. Mrs. Denham's apartment is next to yours, and she may have overheard all that you have been saying."

"I wish she may! and then she will understand me better. I must go home directly."

"You must be mad, my dear Rosalind, to talk in this way. Think of your being so proud and wilful when I was at the pains to write your mother all about Mrs. Denham's intentions, though she might not like it if it came to her ears; and I have not told any one else."

"It would have been far better if you had not told my mother."

"This is not kind—it is not indeed, Rosalind. You may be sure I did it all for the best; and yet, instead of thanking me, and heeding my advice, there you are standing in the middle of the room as proud and passionate as a young Empress when told that she must

wed her conqueror. And this from you, whom I held in my arms the first hour you were born, whom I have nursed whole hours together, loving you as well as if you had been my own child. It is not kind, Rosalind; you do not love me as you used to do."

"Don't say that," cried the affectionate girl, throwing her arms round her neck, quite overcome by her appeal. "I do love you very much—indeed I do. But I am so vexed that I scarcely know what I am saying."

"Ah! now I know my own sweet Rose again. But you must call me Minny as you were wont to do in your childish years, before you could speak plain, when you used to sit in my lap and hug me. And you must believe that I did all for the best."

"I am sure you did, dear Minny," replied Rosalind caressingly; so caressingly that tears came into her old friend's eyes. "But indeed that best was not wisely done."

"I do not agree with you there."

"Oh! but you must, dear Minny."

"But I cannot understand all this over sensitiveness."

"I daresay not, dear Minny; I daresay it is all nonsense, as you think; yet nevertheless you must let me have my own way, or I shall look as proud and as passionate as a young Empress again."

"Well: I suppose I must; for, as Edred Cottrell says, you can wind any one round your finger as King Solomon did the Queen of Sheba."

"Edred Cottrell talks a great deal of nonsense, and is not at all improved by his visit to Paris," observed Rosalind impatiently, adding, with irresistible archness, "I must be in the right you know, since you have vouched for my prudence and forethought."

"You are too much for me, Rose," said the old lady, shaking her head, half vexed, half pleased. "Then you will stay here and try to please Mrs. Denham, won't you?" she added

coaxingly. "For your mother's sake I mean."

"Only for my mother's sake? Ah! Minny, I am half afraid if your dress were a little shorter, that I should see a cloven foot peeping out from under the hem. I will stay, but I will not try to please Mrs. Denham. Now don't look so worried, for I am determined; but hear me out. I will say nothing, do nothing that should offend Mrs. Denham; I will show her every courtesy that as my hostess and an elderly person she has a right to expect; but she shall understand from my manner that I am not what she thinks me now. Even this I can only promise on condition that you will not name me to her. I do not say you must not praise me, because I know if you name me that you could not help it."

"This is just stuff and nonsense. Some of your father's chivalric notions, as he calls them," remarked Mrs. Sewell in vexation.

"Do you consent, Minny? If not I go to Mrs. Denham at once"'

"I suppose I must; for if you once take a thing into your head there is no turning you. You are as self-willed as a donkey. I pity the man who has you for his wife," replied Mrs. Sewell pettishly.

"Only tell Mrs. Denham that; and I will forgive you all the good you have said of me to-day."

"You may laugh, Rosalind, for you know I shall tell Mrs. Denham no such thing; but I warn you that your mother will be greatly disappointed—she hopes much from this visit."

"She shall be told how matters stand this very night."

"You will never be wise, Rosalind; I was a fool to interfere for such an obstinate simpleton."

"Am I an obstinate simpleton?" asked Rosalind coaxingly.

"You are a spoiled child," replied Mrs.

Sewell, kissing her cheek. "But bless me! now I remember, the second bell rang soon after I entered the room; and here have we been gossipping all this time instead of going down stairs; and Mrs. Denham cannot bear to be kept waiting for her dinner. She is a worthy person—a very worthy person, only a *leetle* particular about some things, especially punctuality; so, my dear Rosalind, I do hope that you will make a point of being always ready, as that will please her more than most things."

"You forget that I have declared my determination not to please her. However on this point she shall have no cause to complain, as I hold it one of the duties of a guest. So let us go down at once. Do you perform your part of the contract, and I will perform mine."

"Yes, yes, I will say nothing about you—if I can help it; but let us make haste now, for I daresay Mrs. Denham has been in the drawing room this quarter of an hour."

She was mistaken, Mrs. Denham was not in

the drawing room, but followed them almost immediately; and dinner was announced at the same moment.

The large party staying in the house was rendered larger by the addition of some neighbours; but we shall say nothing of the in or out diners, leaving them to introduce themselves as they please.

"Have you paid a visit to the blue chamber?" whispered Edred Cottrell as he handed Rosalind into the dining room.

"No, mine is the pink room; a more becoming colour for a bed, though not for a dress."

"I did not mean that. You do not, or will not understand me."

"You are half wrong, half right; I do not understand you, but would if I could."

"We are at cross purposes again," he observed, seemingly a little annoyed at her reply. "In plain English, has Mrs. Denham been giving you a lecture since we parted? Now do you understand me?"

"Your words I do, and intend to exercise my woman's privilege of answering one question by asking another. Why should you suppose so? Or why should it interest you to learn?"

"That is an abuse of privilege, fair coz, asking two questions instead of one: I might refuse to answer."

"Then I should suspect some evil purpose in your question."

"No more evil purpose than a friendly, a most friendly interest in your happiness. Was I right in my supposition that you have been condemned to a Denham lecture?"

"No, all in the wrong; I have not seen Mrs. Denham since I parted with her on the lawn. Why did you fancy this?"

"Because you looked so proud, so defying I might almost say, when you entered the drawing room."

"Then you did not give me credit for having become more humble for the lecture, though

in such a case a show at least of submission would have been prudent."

"I cannot flatter you by saying that I saw any symptoms of humility; on the contrary, you looked like some newly dubbed knight seeking for some one on whom to display his prowess."

"You have guessed my mood exactly, so do not provoke me," she answered gaily.

"I would brave your anger if our weapons were really to be those of knights not ladies; but I shrink from an encounter of wit, dreading the tongue more than the sword."

"You are right! The tongue can inflict more deadly wounds than the steel; but I imagined you to be master of both weapons."

"And yet would dare me?" he enquired fixing his hawk like eyes upon her.

"I fear no mortal man;" she answered, meeting his keen gaze unshrinkingly.

"You speak boldly" he replied whilst his bright eye lost its penetrating look, and danced

and sparkled as before. "Are you not afraid of Rupert Wyvill?"

"Most assuredly not; but ready to tilt with him in any lists."

"You said not afraid of mortal man—are you not afraid of mortal woman?" he asked, glancing at Mrs. Denham.

"No; I fear mortal woman as little as mortal man."

"Then you are bolder than I am, cousin Rosalind."

"You underrate your valour."

"No, indeed: you give me credit for greater humility than I possess."

"Do I?"

Edred Cottrell being called on at the moment to help a dish before him, the conversation was broken off for a time.

Mrs. Denham was naturally very silent so the amusement of her guests depended almost entirely on themselves. She was polite and attentive as far as all bodily wants were con-

cerned, but the hearts and minds of her guests were left to find food from others; and even her politeness appeared cold and studied—a duty rather than a pleasure; and as the pleasantness of most parties depends so much on the hostess, or some of her family, the dinners at Denham Park were generally considered heavy affairs. There was handsome plate, capital wine, good cookery, and good waiting; no fuss, no bustle; but there was no ease, no cordiality; and if such was the case on ordinary occasions it was likely to be still more so on the present, when most of those assembled were afraid to look, or move, or speak, except as they thought Mrs. Denham would approve, lest they should lose all chance of becoming her heirs; for either Mrs. Sewell had not been the sole depositary as she supposed of Mrs. Denham's intention, or the Trevors had not been the only persons to whom she had revealed it. The old had tutored themselves and directed their children to have no will or opinion

contrary to the will and opinions of the mistress of Denham Park, till they seemed whilst in her presence, but little better than automatons, and among all the relatives assembled round her well arranged table, only Edred Cottrell and Rosalind Trevor talked, laughed, and jested as was their wont, to the great surprise of the Westons and Baileys. Even Mrs Sewell was not quite herself, being as anxious to procure legacies for the Trevors as though they had been children of her own.

Rosalind and her neighbour were near enough the top of the table to enable Mrs. Denham to overhear their conversation, when not herself engaged in listening or replying to others; but either they were not aware of this, or did not heed it; and as their hostess was supposed to be a little deaf, and appeared to pay no attention to what they were saying, the supposition was that it never reached her ears.

"What will Captain and Mrs. Trevor do

without you?" asked Edred of Rosalind after helping her to some fruit.

"Why I flatter myself that I am an important personage at Ivy Cottage; but as La Bruyere, or some one else says, thank goodness one is not obliged in speaking as in writing to quote one's authorities, "*on se console comme on s'afflige*," and since they cannot enjoy my eloquence of speech, they must content themselves with my eloquence of pen."

"Do you write long letters?"

"Do I not? Up and down, and athwart and across—along the turns down, and under the seal."

"I am sure they must be very amusing. Do let me see your next?"

"No; I do not write public despatches."

"Perhaps you think I shall be offended at the report you intend to make of me."

"Ah! do you think then that my report will be unfavorable? How conscience doth make cowards of us all."

"Nay, fair cousin, I never boasted of my heroism; and he must wear a bold heart indeed, who could hear unmoved that he was to form the subject of a damsel's letter; and Rosalind Trevor has a sharp wit, and a little of woman's love of mischief. Now I would wager my favorite hunter that we shall all be cut up in your next letter—minced small—peppered, salted, and fried, like the *risolle* of which you have just partaken."

"Then wager and lose with a *smile she* replied."

Family groups are proverbially uninteresting."

"Then you think family parties very stupid affairs."

"Yes! 'stale, dull, flat, and unprofitable.'"

"I do not agree with you in thinking family parties so 'stale, dull, flat, and unprofitable,' and with your quickness I am sure you could make some very amusing pen and ink sketches; you have a great talent that way. Flattery and

caricature can give interest to the most uninteresting family group."

This was uttered in a much louder tone than Edred Cottrell's preceeding remarks; and unluckily there chanced to be silence among the other guests at the moment, so that the observation reached the ears of most at table; and Rosalind was made aware by the wondering and displeased looks of those on the opposite side that her censure of family parties was considered a personality, most of those assembled being relatives or connections. Her observation had been made in too subdued a voice to be heard by any but her immediate neighbours; and she was surprised and annoyed at her cousin's sudden elevation of tone; not that she was solicitous to obtain the good opinion of her relations, of whom she knew little, and for whom she cared less; but she felt, that without intending to be rude, her words thus repeated might convey that impression, whilst his reply contained a charge of

flattery and caricature, both of which she scorned. She saw poor Mrs. Sewell in an agony, longing to speak but for once wisely holding her tongue; and she saw significant glances exchanged between others, one particularly, directed from Mrs. Weston to her hostess; but she could not see that it produced any effect.

Having abandoned all idea of winning Mrs. Denham's favor, and now strong in her own integrity, instead of showing confusion, as on the lawn, she answered with spirit, in a tone which, though soft as woman's should be, was still sufficiently clear and distinct to reach those at the further end of the table, since all were silent from surprise.

"So you would recommend me, cousin Edred, to flatter and caricature, for the purpose of making a family party interesting; now it is these very things that in my humble opinion render family groups so little valuable. Affection wishes to have the object of its regard

painted as it really is—the portrait of one who exists, not of one whom the artist fancies; for affection loves more than it admires; instead of which vanity seizes the painter and the painted, and the relative we love, sitting at work in her arm chair, is depicted as a shepherdess sighing over a crook, with a sentimental looking lamb at her side. Out on flattery and caricature as a matter of taste, and a matter of morality! neither shall ever disgrace my pen or pencil. A kind expression of countenance can make the most homely pleasing—an honest heart and friendly acts can make the dullest loveable."

"Hey day! Do you mean to eulogise family parties, which you abused but a moment since?"

"I mean to eulogise honesty of purpose wherever found, but yield affectation and hollowness to your caustic wit."

"My wit, cousin Rosalind! why I have never a chance in an encounter with you:—as

well tilt with a weathercock. You certainly did aver but three minutes since that family parties were 'stale, dull, flat and unprofitable:' —that is poz."

"You have a bad memory, cousin Edred; I only repeated your own words in reference to the family party at the Titleys, which you cut up so unmercifully."

"Ho! ho! So it is you who abuse family parties, not Miss Trevor," exclaimed Mr. Adnam one of the guests, a good-tempered elderly gentleman. "A pretty thing to say here indeed. What is this but a family party, I should like to know?"

"A family party, but not the family party," replied Edred Cottrell, recovering instantly from a slight embarrassment. "I am the most unfortunate creature living. If I talk sense no one heeds me; but if I talk nonsense people give my folly the weight of wisdom. Here is all this goodly company looking as black as a thunder storm, and taking to itself my evil re-

port of a household turn-out, whereas my very boldness of speech should be held as proof of my innocence of sarcasm on any present. I did cut up the Titley's family party I confess. It was such a party! Six words an hour on an average from all except Mr. Titley, who prosed on about the corn laws at the rate of fifty, applying to me every now and then for my assent to propositions and assertions which no only moderately witted person could understand, thus preventing his listeners from indulging in a refreshing nap. I would not wish my fiercest enemy so great a punishment as the endurance of two such parties in the course of his life; and if Miss Trevor and myself did cut up family parties a little unmercifully, the most charitable must have forgiven us in consideration of the provocation."

"Do not include me in the charge; I defended the whole family against your censures, and knowing Mr. Titley's real worth, helped

you to give proper answers to his corn law questions. You have a shocking bad memory this evening, cousin Edred."

"True you defended them, cousin Rosalind —but how did you defend them? There are such things as words belied by looks:—a sober speech and a malicious smile."

"There are; and you seem well acquainted with their use. I defended the Titleys honestly, and you are mistaken if you fancied otherwise: that I could not resist laughing at your droll remarks will surprise none who know your powers of ridicule."

"Fairly beaten, Cottrell! fairly beaten! the lady wins the day," exclaimed Mr. Adnam. "You do wisely to retire whilst victory remains with your sex," he added as Mrs. Denham made the move for quitting the dining room. Rosalind had intended to occupy the time till tea in writing home; but the evening was so lovely, and the fragrance from the flowers came in so deliciously at the open windows, that,

yielding to the temptation, she deferred her purpose, and instead of seeking her own apartment strolled out upon the lawn. After enjoying for a time the beauty of the roses, then in great perfection, tired of the common place remarks of some of the party, she sauntered on towards the shrubbery, till she found a seat to her taste in a sort of open temple fronting the west, situated at the meeting of four green alleys.

"What are you admiring, my romantic coz?" questioned Edred, taking a seat beside her.

"The golden gleaming of the setting sun, terminating the vista of that green path, bounded by lofty yews," she replied without turning her head.

"Ay, I see, fancying yourself Eve in the garden of Eden—is it not so?"

"And you the serpent tempting me to evil?"

"Rather the Adam of your paradise."

"This is no paradise to me:" I feel more like the "Exile of Siberia, than Eve in her Eden."

"Feel like the Exile of Siberia—here—in the garden of Denham Park! The very idea is a scandal to the kindness and hospitality of your high minded hostess."

"The kindness and hospitality of my high minded hostess!" repeated Rosalind rather contemptuously. "Oh! yes, I remember she hoped that I was not fatigued after my journey; and asked me to take fish."

Edred laughed. "You are growing satirical; but you cannot deny the meed of praise to Denham Park and its grounds."

"Oh! the house, park, and grounds are well enough; particularly on such a sunny day as this; I have been luxuriating among the roses, and begin to entertain a sort of affection for those fine old yews, which accord so well with my present melancholy mood; but still I feel as a stranger and intruder here, where no one but kind Mrs. Sewell cares whether I laugh or cry;—an exile from Ivy Cottage, and its dear inmates."

"Home sick already, when you have not been here twelve hours—that is capital! Fancying yourself 'The Exile of Siberia,' and our good hostess I suppose the tyrannical Emperor —I beg your pardon, Mrs. Denham; I had no idea that you were near us," he added quickly on perceiving that lady beside him.

Her foot-fall on the soft turf had been unheard by Rosalind, who turned abruptly on hearing Edred's exclamation, and thus fronted her formal cousin.

"I fancied you a mile off, or should never have said what I did," continued Cottrell on finding that Mrs. Denham made no remark on his apology.

"I have no wish to check the conversation of my friends," she answered coldly.

"Oh! I know that, my dear Mrs. Denham; no one is more liberal in these matters—no one cares less than yourself for an inadvertent word; but that only makes me more sorry—more vexed that you should have come just at that

unlucky moment—my fate is always against me. Not that we were saying anything very, very—extraordinary, only Miss Trevor, naturally enough, feels a little lonely at being in a strange place, among strange people; and expressed herself rather fancifully about it."

"Her feeling lonely on the first day of her arrival is as you say very natural and requires no apology. I do not like new places, nor new acquaintances myself," observed Mrs. Denham in her usual measured tone, pursuing her way towards the house as she concluded.

It was impossible from her manner to suppose Mrs. Denham aware that the comments which she must have overheard had the slightest connection with her, or her possessions.

"That was a very unlucky *contretemps;* but we got out of the scrape pretty well considering," remarked Edred Cottrell, resuming his seat beside his cousin.

"Rosalind, my dear, I have brought you a

shawl, for fear you should catch cold. The dews are rising, so do pray come in," said Mrs. Sewell, interrupting the *tête-á-tête*.

"Have you been thinking of me all this time, dear Minny, instead of your worsted work, and really ventured out in the dew to save me from catching cold? What a good soul you are! I must never be wayward or wilful again, at least not to you," cried the grateful Rosalind, passing her hand caressingly down her old friend's cheek, and looking up in her face with a smile that would have softened the heart of a cynic.

"To be sure, Rose; you are always in my thoughts, for I have no children of my own to think of. But come along, for I feel the dew falling faster and faster."

"Very well; wait a minute till I have arranged my shawl in graceful folds. I had some idea of coquetting with the glow-worms this evening; but I suppose I must coquet with

you instead," said Rosalind, drawing Mrs. Sewell's arm within hers, and marching off towards the nearest gravel walk, leaving Edred to follow or not as he pleased.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT are you reading, cousin mine?" enquired Edred approaching Rosalind later in the evening, when all the party had reassembled in the drawing room.

"You are in an inquisitive mood to-night; I am not reading."

"There is a book in your hand."

"So, there is in Mr. Bailey's," she replied, glancing towards that gentleman, who had fallen into a quiet slumber.

"Granted; but you are not asleep."

"I believe I was dreaming."

"Dreaming of what?"

"It is vulgar to tell dreams, so you must excuse me."

"Have you such a horror of vulgarity."

"To be sure I have! What a question!"

Before Edred, who appeared puzzled by his companion's manner could reply, Maria Weston had taken her place at the piano, and was playing the symphony of one of Malibran's most elaborate songs. Nature had done much for the singer—art its utmost; and the praises showered upon her as the last notes died away into silence were sincere, if a little exaggerated.

"That is very fine I daresay, but I would much rather hear you; Maria wants feeling," remarked Edred Cottrell as the singer ceased.

"That proves you deficient in taste; my voice is not to be compared to hers," replied Rosalind, not at all embarrassed by the compliment.

"Do you sing, Miss Trevor?" asked Mrs. Denham, approaching at the moment.

"A little—all young ladies sing a little."

"A little? beautifully! divinely! the rich wild notes of the nightingale," exclaimed Edred in an ecstacy.

"I hope you will favor us with a song, Miss Trevor," said Mrs. Denham.

The request was so coldly worded that Rosalind hesitated a moment, then answered as coldly.

"If you wish it; but not yet—Miss Weston is going to sing again."

Miss Weston was capricious, and difficult to please, turning over song after song; and before she had decided Mrs. Denham was called away to receive another guest.

"Allow me to present Mr. Rupert Wyvill neat as just imported," said Cottrell, bringing up his cousin to the startled Rosalind, whose attention had been so much engaged with the singer, that she had not observed the fresh arrival.

"I have had the honor of meeting Mr.

Wyvill before," she replied returning his bow with great dignity.

" Thank goodness! he was not here this morning to witness my confusion," was her thought.

" Oh! yes I remember: you met at Wrexley, where you out-did Camilla, or Atalanta, racing with those merry children. Believe that we have too much good taste ever to forget the grace of your movements, and the bewitching fall of your ringlets a little disordered by the romp," observed Edred gaily. " You agree with me, Wyvill, don't you! Come, say something civil, man, instead of looking so bewildered; you cannot have forgotten the race, you made so many remarks on it afterwards."

" Certainly not: Miss Trevor's grace was too striking to be forgotten; but I am—"

" Not an admirer of romps," interposed Rosalind, piqued at his hesitation, and remembering with annoyance the term by which he had designated her.

"I must admire Miss Trevor in all characters," he replied with a bow which Rosalind construed to mean—; the girl asks for a compliment, so she must have it.

"Pray do not waste flattering speeches on me, Mr. Wyvill: I am weary of them, and prefer sincerity, though amounting to bluntness."

"There was a something in Rosalind's manner that appeared to surprise him to whom her words were addressed; but before he could reply, she was summoned to take her place at the piano.

Edred followed, and was very assiduous in arranging the book, lights, &c.

"Do sing this; it is such a favorite of mine?" he pleaded, taking up an Italian song which was exceedingly difficult.

"It is an exquisite *morceau*, but requires a finer voice than mine: Miss Weston should sing it: she would do it justice," replied his cousin putting it aside.

"She would not give it half the expression that you will: she wants soul," whispered Edred, again placing it before her:

"Pray sing that," said Mrs. Weston. "I am sure it will suit you, and Maria does not consider it at all difficult."

"Yes, do pray! I should so like to hear you sing it," added her daughter.

Rosalind knew that it did not suit her voice, and that her singing must appear to great disadvantage after Maria's; but thus urged she thought it would seem like affectation or ill nature to refuse.

"You shall have your wish, and my compliance will prove the truth of my assertion that it requires a finer voice to do it justice. I never tried it but once a long time since, and shall prove an admirable foil to Miss Weston."

Mrs. Weston asserted her conviction that Miss Trevor would sing exquisitely, and do full justice to the composer; and whilst Maria was looking about for a missing leaf, Rosalind had

the annoyance of hearing Edred Cottrell assure Mrs. Denham and others that she possessed one of the most powerful and highly cultivated voices he had ever heard; and the still greater vexation of marking, as she believed, a mocking smile on the lip of Rupert Wyvill.

"Exquisite! divine! enchanting! Not Malibran herself could have outdone that! I can now understand the Italian *furor* for sweet sounds, being half transformed into a *fanatico* myself by your delicious strains. Do give us one more song in the same style?" exclaimed the enraptured Cottrell, attempting to detain her at the piano.

"Hush! hush! cousin Edred, before you have proved yourself utterly deficient in judgment. Your eyes," glancing at those around, "if not your ears, should tell you that my attempt was a failure—an utter failure," replied his cousin, leaving the instrument notwithstanding his efforts to detain her.

"A failure, Rosalind! How can you say

so! I have seldom heard any thing more exquisite. Have you Wyvill?" he added appealing to Rupert.

"I do not boast of my taste in music as you do, Cottrell," he began, looking up from a print over which he was bending.

"Thank you, Mr. Wyvill, for not paying me a compliment at the expence of your sincerity," said Rosalind quickly.

"You cut off my sentence in the middle, Miss Trevor, or its termination might have given a different character to my words."

"That was not polite of my cousin Rosalind, but really you spoke so slow, Wyvill, that no wonder a quick-witted person should grow impatient, and interrupt you. What is come to you, man? You want some quicksilver," rattled on Edred Cottrell, laying hold of Rupert's shoulder to turn him round to the light.

"I never was a will-o'-the-wisp—a dancing meteor; and my long confinement to the house with that horrid fever has left me dull and weak."

"Oh, yes the fever!—I remember now. You tumbled into a river or some such thing. Did not they shave your head? Do you wear a wig? You are looking monstrous sallow quite interesting! the ladies like sallow men, only your hair ought to be jet black, instead of which it is only dark brown."

"La, Mr. Cottrell, how funny you are going on!" cried Miss Bailey tittering.

"Do you object to my being funny?"

"Oh! dear no—I like it."

"Do you deny that ladies prefer sallow men? Now take care how you answer."

"I declare I do not know what you mean: I am sure I don't think you sallow," replied the silly, simpering girl.

"Yet still you like me, Miss Bailey?"

"I did not say so—did I? You are so droll Mr. Cottrell."

"If you did not say so, you thought so, for which receive my unbounded gratitude," said Edred, making a most profound bow, at which

the young lady simpered still more, and might have again expressed her wonder at his drollery had she not been called on to perform a duet with her sister.

"What a beautiful creature! I never saw any one so lovely;" observed Rosalind Trevor to Edred, as he again sauntered towards her, Mrs. Denham, with whom he had before been conversing, having left him to speak to Mr. Adnam.

"Whom do you mean?"

"Are you blind as well as deaf this evening? Whom can I mean but Maria Weston? Features, figure, and complexion all so perfect, and so dazzling; with such bright golden hair, and so much style."

"And so much expression—will you not add that too?" asked Edred looking at Maria through his glass.

"Not much; but what there is is pleasing and amiable. I am sure she has a very good temper, notwithstanding her mother's attempts to spoil her."

"A fig for the good temper, which is the result of indolence and want of feeling! Give me mind in a woman."

"That is if her mind can always be the same as yours; otherwise I doubt if we ladies are considered more attractive for having minds."

"Yes, you are Rosalind; that is a libel on our sex. Give me a quick wit, a warm heart, and a countenance that changes its expression every moment, like a summer sunset. Rosalind Trevor is worth ten Maria Westons."

"More beautiful?" questioned Rosalind archly, looking up in his face.

"A thousand times more so in my eyes."

"A richer, and more powerful voice?"

"Far richer, and far more thrilling to my taste."

"Get thee behind me, evil spirit! thou wouldst league thyself with my natural vanity against me," replied Rosalind, making a motion with her hand as if to put him away, whilst a slight frown came on her brow.

"I am no evil spirit, Rosalind; my words are the words of truth."

"Rather of guile and falsehood."

"I protest!"

"Protest not! for I will believe no such protestations. Must I repeat that I prefer sincerity, though amounting to bluntness, to the silver tones of flattery?" she replied, wounded at his pertinacity; and the more so as Rupert Wyvill was within hearing, and again she fancied with a mocking curl upon his lip.

"This is but your enchanting modesty, Rosalind, which lends a fresh charm to your beauty."

"Now hush, cousin Edred, if you would ever, have me believe you again. Do you suppose that I have neither eyes nor ears? I know that I am neither a gorgon, nor a sea-gull; but as for comparing my face or voice to Miss Weston's, no one but an idiot could do it in sincerity—no one but a knave would do it in

insincerity. So there are two horns of a dilemma—on which will you be tossed? Shall I count you knave or idiot? or will you forswear flattery, and let me still believe you honest and reasonable?"

"I will think anything—say anything which you command, so that you will but hold me in high favor."

"Is this to prove you honest or reasonable? However it will be no hard task master; so do but keep clear of flattery, and we will be good friends; for as Miss Bailey says, you are very droll and amusing."

"My admiration shall not be expressed in words since you desire silence; but my thoughts—"

"I fear not the flattery of your thoughts," she observed interrupting him. "Only pray get rid of this sentimental air which does not at all become you, and reach me that large book, for I have a fancy to look at its contents."

Turning to point out the book, she saw that Mrs. Denham was standing near, and she fancied watching her; whilst Mrs. Sewell was saying something to her in an earnest tone.

"Do come and sing me one of my favorite ballads, my dear," said Mrs. Sewell approaching.

"Not one more note to-night, though you have been persuading Mrs. Denham that I sing ballads exquisitely."

"I only—" began Mrs. Sewell, confounded by Rosalind's accusation.

"You only did, my dear Mrs. Sewell, just what you engaged not to do—namely praised me—I guess it all," said Rosalind reproachfully.

"Nay but, Rosa dear; I only said that you were very good-natured to sing that song."

"Then you said, pardon my freedom, the thing which was not. It was not at all good-natured;—I did it out of pure wilfulness, and

had there been any person present whom I wished to charm, I should not have undertaken what I knew I could not perform."

"Well but, Rosa dear, now do sing? Don't be wayward."

"Ah! Mrs. Sewell, so the truth will out; and I am wayward, am I, despite all your praises? Ay, and I will be wayward too, so look you to it. It is a singular coincidence that I am always particularly wilful, just when you wish me to be particularly amiable."

"Now, Rosa, how can you be so provoking? Mrs. Denham wishes you to sing some English song."

"Now if I find you out in a fib, Minny, you shall be put in the corner, and have your finger burnt in the candle to show what story tellers will have to endure hereafter," cried Rosalind with glee, "Mrs. Denham, do you wish me to sing an English song?" she added turning to that lady with sudden gravity.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Denham, in her usual quiet tone.

"Caught! caught! fairly caught!" exclaimed Mr. Adnam.

"There I told you so," cried Mrs. Sewell, triumphantly.

"Yes indeed, caught in my own toils," said Rosalind, vexed with herself for having made the appeal; and vexed with her hostess for having answered as she had done. "But Mrs. Denham only said yes to save you, Mrs. Sewell, from being put in the corner for telling fibs."

"I answered your question truly, Miss Trevor," observed Mrs. Denham, with a gravity that ill accorded with the playful conversation carried on by those around her.

"There, Rosalind, now you must sing," cried Mrs. Sewell in still greater glee.

"Certainly; it would be rude to refuse after having asked the question; I shall be more

prudent in future, and you may depend on my paying you off, Minny," added Rosalind, holding up her finger in merry menace.

"There was a song your mother used to sing in former days, that was a great favorite of mine," said Mr. Adnam.

"Did you know my mother then?" asked Rosalind with interest.

"Yes, and admired, ay, and loved her too, as all who knew her did; and I am rejoiced to meet her daughter under this roof, where we have passed so many happy hours together."

"I did not know that you were a friend of my mother's; it is delightful to meet those who love her," said Rosalind with feeling. "What is the name of your favorite song? If I know it, you shall have it, though it should suit my voice no better than the Ranz des Vaches."

"I have not heard such kindly tones for a long time, young lady; old as I am, I shall be

more in love with you than I was with your mother."

"Please not, Mr. Adnam, people are so stupid when they are in love. What is the name of the song?"

"I think the first line runs thus :—

'Deceit may dwell in winning smile,'

Do you know it?"

"I would rather not sing it," answered Rosalind quickly, with an involuntary glance at Mrs. Denham.

"Nay but you said I should choose, and I will have no other."

"Very well then, since it must be so," replied Rosalind, taking her seat at the piano without further comment.

SONG.

Deceit may dwell in winning smile,
And fraud in beaming glance;
Mean hearts may stoop to practise guile,
Or weak ones bend to chance;
And all beside grow false and cold—
All fail in love and truth:
Not so the friend I lov'd of old—
The friend of early youth.

Our young feet stray'd beside the brook,
That murmur'd sweetly by;
On wood and wave we bent our look,
Then sought each other's eye.
Our hopes, our joys had but one will—
Both wept when sorrow came;
Through chance and change—through good and ill
Our love shall be the same.

"Beautiful! just as your mother used to sing it, only perhaps with a little more energy—a little more passion, if I may be allowed the expression," exclaimed Mr. Adnam at the conclusion of the song, breaking the silence which had been maintained by all.

"It is a pretty, simple air, and suits Miss

Trevor's voice," observed Mrs. Weston with a polite and patronising manner.

Mrs. Denham turned away without speaking, whilst Mrs. Sewell, forgetful of her promise, began praising her young favorite and her performance to Mrs. Bailey, who would have preferred some other subject, for, though a good-natured woman, she did not wish to have her own consciousness of Rosalind's superiority over her daughters confirmed by the opinion of another.

"I never heard that song before, though I thought I knew all your stock," observed Edred to his cousin.

"I never sing it to strangers—my mother would not like it."

"Strangers, Rosalind! Do you count me a stranger?"

"I count you a very merry, amusing person, and good-natured in the main, though a little mischievous sometimes."

"In plain prose, an unfeeling rattle. I

thank you, Miss Trevor!" he replied piqued at her words.

"That is your interpretation not mine. Do you proclaim yourself sentimental, and wish me to affix my signature to the proclamation?"

"No, Momus defend me from the sentimentals! But I am not unfeeling."

"I never said you were. You have the prose, but not the poetry of feeling; that is scarcely in man's nature—it requires the quickness, the delicacy of woman's tact to perceive the many shades, the softer tints of suffering or affection."

"Ah, yes; that is all too poetical and sentimental for me; I am for the lights of life, and leave the shades to others. But what change has come over you since your arrival here? I never heard you talk book before. For which of your present audience is this intended? Not for Mrs. Denham, or Rupert Wyvill it is to be hoped; for they seem quite insensible to your eloquence, the former having walked

away—the latter being absorbed in study. And I fear the rest of the company have not profited much by your oratory. I must retort your advice to me not an hour since, sweet coz. Get rid of the sentimental, for it does not suit you. *Vive la bagatelle !*—let that be our motto.—Do play me a merry, jig, Miss Bailey, lest Miss Trevor's sentimental singing and sentimental face should infect me with the blues."

"Why there is no pleasing you, weather-cock as you are. Scarcely five minutes back you were blaming Miss Trevor for not thinking you the very extract of feeling; and now you are quarrelling with her for not being as rattle-brained as yourself," observed Mr. Adnam displeased with what seemed a censure on his favorite song.

"To be sure, Mr. Adnam. Do you suppose in the present state of locomotion that one is to remain longer in the same mind, than in the same place? Let who will be a railway

station never moving—let me be a railway carriage, whisking through the air—the wonder of the timid and commonplace."

"Leaving nothing but smoke behind," remarked Mr. Adnam drily.

"Illuminating the country as I pass along, and bearing millions in my train. You must get rid of your old fashioned notions; my steam is up, and I shall carry the day. You will be one of my company, Miss Trevor, will you not?"

"Do not think of it; his company is below par," said Mr. Adnam.

"Do you mean the present company? Send him to Coventry, ladies and gentlemen for the insult," replied Edred glancing gaily round on his hearers. "Ha! ha! Mr. Adnam you would blow me up, if you could;—but you can't;—I can bear a pressure of sixty pounds on the square inch without exploding. Now Miss Bailey for the jig."

"Ah, yes! that young fellow is too quick

for me, I am getting old and stupid," said Mr. Adnam with a good-humoured shake of the head. "He will carry all before him."

"I thought he boasted of dragging all behind him," observed Rupert Wyvill looking up from his book.

"There is the rub! those steam carriages can go either way; and so can he: rush on till you think him lost by his rashness, when—lo! he suddenly backs out of the difficulty, and runs over you, so that there is no knowing where to have him. I wish you would enter the field against him, Wyvill."

"Thank you, sir, but I am much more inclined at present to take my ease than to enact the warlike."

"Indolence should be left to us worn-out old fellows, who can only point a moral, not adorn a tale. You should be active and daring—ready for any thing. Do stir him up, Miss Trevor; you have energy enough to inspire and animate all around you."

"In plain prose, as Mr. Cottrell says, I am a romp and a vixen—Is that what you mean, Mr. Adnam?" questioned Rosalind archly, yet with a slight touch of vexation in the tone.

"No such thing, Miss Trevor; I am sure you are neither. Come, Wyvill, do say something pretty for me—play the courtier, if you will not play the hero."

"I am afraid I should prove as unskilful in one as the other; and Miss Trevor professes a dislike to pretty speeches."

"Psha, man! Do you believe all a young lady's professions? If so lack-a-day for your wisdom."

"At present I am just in the mood to believe whatever will entail least trouble."

"Out upon your indolence! You want a good shaking or a good scolding. Do assist me, Miss Trevor, in inflicting the latter."

"What do you take me for a scold, as well as a romp and a vixen? that is supposing me

endowed with a superabundance of energy indeed."

"No, no! I do nothing but get into scrapes to-night. But there is Rupert Wyvill, a clever, well informed young man."

"Is he," observed Rosalind quietly.

"Ay, that he is; and can be very pleasant."

"Can he," repeated Rosalind in the same dry tone, which could not be called assenting.

"To be sure he can, though he will not give himself the trouble to attempt it half his time. Now do persuade him to make himself agreeable."

"I am still a very simple body in some things, Mr. Adnam; but I gave up attempting impossibilities some fifteen years ago, when I found I could not induce my doll to talk."

"There Wyvill! won't that pique you into playing the pleasant?"

"I am never piqued into playing any thing."

"For the honor of my penetration at least do prove that you can be agreeable."

"Excuse me: I cannot undertake to prove the truth of all my friends' assertions. If they will draw rash conclusions I cannot help it."

"It is not a rash conclusion; you know you can be exceedingly agreeable," exclaimed Mr. Adnam pettishly, vexed at his ill success. "I have known you entertain your hearers, ay, absolutely enchain their attention for hours together. And this I must beg you to believe, Miss Trevor, whatever he may choose to say to the contrary."

"Miss Trevor is not given to credulity," observed Rupert with a smile, which, though slight, had something of mischief in it.

"It is a fact," said Mr. Adnam resolutely.

"That settles the point; I never believe a fact," said Rosalind laughing. "Theories may be true or false; but facts are never to be trusted; they are like props, brought forward to support a falling superstructure."

"It is very tiresome of you both," cried the old gentleman still more petulantly. "I would have vouched for your being reasonable, Miss Trevor."

"Vouch for Mr. Wyvill's being agreeable if you please, that is your concern, or his; but never I warn you vouch for my being reasonable," interposed Rosalind before he could finish the sentence.

"You are out of luck to-night, Mr. Adnam," said Rupert with more animation than he had hitherto shown. "You pull the wires, but your puppets refuse to dance."

"Am I to understand that you designate me as a puppet?" questioned Rosalind a little haughtily.

"That is right! At him Miss Trevor—he deserves it," cried Mr. Adnam rubbing his hands with glee; "you are in for it now, Wyvill; for she has a sharp wit."

"Has she," said Rupert in precisely the same tone employed by Rosalind a short time

before, when told of his being a pleasant, well informed young man.

"Yes that she has: she can make you succumb if she will."

"Can she," said Rupert in the same tone.

"Yes, that she can! cut him up, Miss Trevor! show what you can do when piqued."

"I am never piqued into doing anything," answered Rosalind, following Rupert's lead and using his former words and tone.

"Oh! don't let him off in that way. Attack him, and he will rouse himself to the encounter. Do not believe that his indifference is real."

"I am in a mood to believe any thing that will cause me least trouble," said Rosalind, turning away to join Mrs. Sewell, after one glance at Rupert to see how he bore her words. She felt rather piqued at the discussion—was he the like? If so he did not show it; and she fancied she could perceive the same scarcely perceptible smile of conscious power, which had so much annoyed her some years before.

Fatigued with her journey she retired to rest almost immediately, whilst Mr. Adnam betook himself to scolding Wyvill for his indolence, regretting that he had not been able to get up a fight, as he called it, between him and Rosalind.

CHAPTER V.

"Do come and join us instead of sitting out here with a book, looking so learned and unsociable?" began Mrs. Sewell, approaching Rosalind, who was seated in an inner apartment, too much delighted with the work she was perusing to speculate on what opinions might be formed on her keeping apart from the other guests.

"But I am so happy, dear Minny; and being neither German wool, needle, nor canvass, the ladies can do very well without me."

"But Mrs. Denham may think it odd, my dear."

"What's Hecuba to me, or I to Hecuba?" exclaimed Rosalind Trevor in a mock heroic tone. "Depend upon it she is thinking of her next rent-day—not of me."

"It is very wrong of you, Rosalind, to speak in this way of your hostess; for your mother's sake, you should try to please her. Remember what friends they were in their youth."

"What then? Whose fault is it, that they are not friends now? But we discussed that point yesterday; and you have not kept your engagement. You know you have been praising me contrary to our agreement, therefore I am not bound to be more than civil to Mrs. Denham; that is all which she has a right to expect from me, so say no more about it."

"You are in a wilful mood again, I can see that," said Mrs. Sewell in vexation.

Rosalind laughed, and looked playfully malicious.

"But do put away your book, Rose; and come to the work table: I want you to amuse me."

"You want me to amuse you? Don't tell fibs, dear Minny, as I warned you last night, or you will be in the corner in no time. You can amuse yourself very well without me; but I see how it is: the gentlemen having departed for the fair, either to buy horses or to sell them —to cheat or to be cheated, I do not remember which—the ladies need some entertainment, so have sent you to engage me for the purpose. Is there no monkey, or boy with mice and a hurdy-gurdy that would do as well; then I might be allowed to read in peace?"

"Nonsense, Rosalind! you do fancy such odd things. The truth is every one is remarking that you keep aloof from your cousins, so they are setting you down as proud and disagreeable; and this vexes me. You have scarcely spoke to any of them since your arrival."

"Which said arrival took place yesterday about five o'clock; and I chattered as fast as I could till I went to bed, and continued to talk in my sleep. Will you have the goodness to hold a committee, Mrs. Denham chairwoman, and decide how many words it is needful I should utter in one day:—that determined, I will get my task over as early as possible in the morning; and then perhaps I may be allowed my evenings to myself."

"You are in such an odd humour, Rosalind, that I do not know whether you are in jest or earnest," said Mrs. Sewell, really bewildered by her young favorite's gravity.

"Leave the problem unsolved, dear Minny," answered Rosalind with a smile. "The earth will twirl round on its axis just the same whether I play sage or *pulcinella*."

"Very likely, my dear child, but you are too young to set the opinion of the world at defiance; besides it does not do for a woman at any time."

"No, it is not one of our very few privileges certainly; and there is the hardship. Now a man may go hop, skip, and jump through the world with one side of his face like a harlequin, and the other like a judge; and provided he can give his friends good dinners, Havannah cigars, and a battu, he is considered not only amusing, but estimable and clever; whilst we poor women alas! must walk through life as if we had been drilled, with a stately step and sober dignity, eschewing all feeling and romance—working ottomans—keeping the house—scolding the servants—and obeying one's husband."

"Well, Rosalind, is not that all right—and a womans' duty?"

"Oh, yes! all right! and a woman's duty! —at least so the menfolks say."

"Well, and they are wiser than we are."

"Umph! they take degrees at Oxford and Cambridge if that is to be counted as proof."

"You are in a very droll way this morning,

Rosa: I never thought you at all masculine before. Surely you do not want to give good dinners, battus, and Havannah cigars."

"My good fairy defend me!" cried Rosalind bursting into a fit of laughter at the bewilderment of the matter of fact Mrs. Sewell. "I have no taste for entremets or cigars; and have always kept at a respectful distance from a gun, since Michael shot off my favorite curl; but I am in a merry mood this morning, and should like the privilege of a hop, skip, and a jump sometimes. I shall never be drilled into a proper, sober, womanly nonentity, like my beautiful cousin Maria Weston, so it is of no use to attempt it. Like those cows in the distance, when bitten by the gad-fly mischief, I must have my way, and frisk hither and thither at pleasure; ay, and laugh and cry too when touched or amused."

"I do not wish to drill you into silence, Rosalind, your spirits are so delightful; only do come and sit with your cousins, for I can-

not bear to hear every body talking of your being proud and unsociable, and giving yourself airs. As I said before, a woman should not brave the opinion of the world."

"She must be a brave woman indeed who would do so. Every body—and the world. What grand, high sounding words! Collective nouns, or collective pronouns, or some such things. Quite terrific! Bugbears to alarm the grown up children of this earth. The world generally means three old gossips—male or female, as the chance may be—a dandy, and a flirt. Now is it wise to heed the criticism of five such judges?"

"You are all in the wrong, Rosalind; it was a very clever person who said it, and a great favorite of yours."

"Did Mr. Wyvill say so?" questioned Rosalind with great animation.

"No, my dear; I did not know that he was a favorite of yours."

"Certainly not;" replied Rosalind colour-

ing. "I alluded to the first part of your remark."

"Oh! to his being clever. Why people say so; but he does not talk much, and never looks at, or thinks of you."

A slight pouting of her ruby lip was Rosalind's only comment on this assertion.

"Who may this very clever person be then, who honors me with his remarks?"

"Edred Cottrell, my dear."

"Edred Cottrell!" repeated Miss Trevor in great surprise, and some indignation.

"Yes, Edred Cottrell; and I hope you will heed what he says, as he is such a great friend of yours."

"I must know all and about it first, so sit down here and tell me," said Rosalind after a moment's thought.

"Ay, now you are growing reasonable," observed Mrs. Sewell, delighted at the prospect of carrying her point.

"No, Minny dear, I am not reasonable; but

I am very impatient, so pray tell me at once. What did Mr. Cottrell say? and when did he say it? and to whom did he say it?"

"Why we, that is the Baileys and Westons," said Mrs. Sewell, correcting herself, "were talking about you this morning in the breakfast room after you had strolled out on the lawn; and Mrs. Bailey remarked that you seemed a niceish young woman, only rather difficult to make acquaintance with."

"A niceish young woman!" muttered Rosalind with a half satirical, half comical smile; but Mrs. Sewell did not hear her and continued.

"'Yes, said Mrs. Weston, she does appear very unsociable; I will not be uncharitable and say that she gives herself airs, but hope her seeming pride is merely the effect of her country education and limited knowlege of the world—the awkwardness of one brought up in seclusion. Ease and elegance are only to be acquired by mixing from childhood in the highest circles, she added with an approving

glance at her eldest daughter, who is a dull piece of still life to my mind. 'She sets up for a wit and a clever woman, and has no repose of manner, and no taste in dress,' observed Terry Weston, arranging his hair at the glass. I could have boxed the puppy's ears.—'She is a monstrous fine girl with some dash, some go in her,' remarked his brother Richard, flicking his whip, or Tommy as he calls it, at his sister. 'She does not condescend to speak to any one but Mr. Cottrell—what does he say of her? You all saw how silent she was at breakfast between papa and Mr. Wyvill,' observed Miss Bailey pertly. As if you could have talked to her papa indeed, who knows nothing of anything but stocks and funds.—'I agree with Richard Weston, Miss Bailey: Miss Trevor is a monstrous fine girl with some dash—some go in her, or, to use more elegant and appropriate language, she is a beautiful, talented, high spirited girl.'—'Oh! she is such a favorite of yours, of course you will say so. And I sup-

pose you will not allow her to be proud and unsociable,' sneered Miss Bailey. I could have boxed her ears too."

"You must have a very large organ of combativeness, my dear Mrs. Sewell," observed Rosalind laughing. "I shall have to stand bail for you for a breach of the peace in my behalf. But what did cousin Edred say to this?"

"Oh! he took your part of course, saying—'You are mistaken, Miss Bailey; Miss Trevor is not proud—she is ever kind to the poor and humble; but you must not expect a girl with her beauty and talents to find pleasure in general, commonplace society. She would not purposely be rude, but, being very clever herself, she is only interested in those who resemble her; and therefore sometimes gives offence to strangers unintentionally, by showing her preference for a book, or her own thoughts. I wish for her own sake she would always make herself as delightful as I have seen her at times.

I daresay you will find her very agreeable when she comes to know more of you; bnt she seldom takes to new acquaintances unless she thinks them remarkably clever and *spirituel*.'—'So she considers us all stupid, silly and commonplace; and therefore will not take to us,' exclaimed Miss Bailey in a huff.—'She never told me this, so you must not repeat what I have said, it may be only my fancy,' replied Mr. Cottrell, vexed at having let out so much. —'I shall certainly not force myself upon her, and think in so young a person a little humility would be desirable. As her especial friend, Mr. Cottrell, you should advise her to show more respect and regard for her relatives. Were my girls to exhibit so much hauteur, which I am sure they will not, I should be very much annoyed. Do not you agree with me, Mrs. Denham, that it shows a defect in disposition or education when a girl gives herself airs?' remarked Mrs. Weston."

"Did not you long to box her ears too?" asked Rosalind archly.

"That I did, as you may suppose, particularly when Mrs. Denham said yes."

"Was that all she said?"

"Yes, all; you know she never says much; but she did not look best pleased, and I am sure wishes you to talk more to your cousins."

"Did Mr. Cottrell say anything further?"

"Not a great deal, for the horses were announced almost immediately. He said you were too talented to be judged by common rules; and that when you took a fancy to a person you were perfectly bewitching, but otherwise you were generally considered reserved and unsociable. He would try and persuade you to be more accessible, but feared he had not much influence. And that was all I think. Oh, no! I remember some one, Terry Weston I believe, said he was sure you were satirical; but Mr. Cottrell would not allow this

at all, declaring, on the contrary, that you always laughed at every body in a good-natured way."

"And this was really all that passed?" asked Rosalind anxiously.

"Yes; that is the sense of all that passed, and, as far as I can remember, the words."

"And did Mrs. Sewell say nothing in defence of her pet?"

"You know, Rosalind, you insisted yesterday that I should not speak of you at all," replied Mrs. Sewell looking away.

"And you heard me abused yet kept silence?"

Mrs. Sewell made no reply.

"Ah, naughty Minny! you would tell a fib if you dared, and did not think I should find you out."

"Well then I did speak, if you must know. It was not in flesh and blood to hold my peace when they accused you of giving yourself airs, which you never did in all your life, though

you may be a little wilful and vexatious sometimes."

"I hope you had the candour to admit that in the midst of all your eulogiums."

"No, to be sure I did not. But there are you laughing at what I have told you, when I am all in a passion."

"That is very wrong, my dear Mrs. Sewell, and comes of your country education."

"You may jest as you please, Rosalind; but it is no jesting matter," observed the old lady pettishly, though unable to resist a smile at Rosalind's merry face. "I think a great deal of what I have told you."

"So do I; but I cannot help laughing at your being in such a rage with these good people for abusing your pet."

"You might be better employed, Miss Trevor, than in laughing at your mother's old friend who loves you as well as that mother herself."

"Much better employed, dear Minny; and

that is in thanking you for all your kindness," said the affectionate girl, kissing her cheek.

"Ay, that is the way you get over me," replied Mrs. Sewell, returning the caress, and looking as if she thought there was no one on earth like her young favorite—so good—so fair—so clever. "But I wish you would think seriously of what I have been saying."

"I do think very seriously of it," answered Rosalind, with a look of thought that delighted Mrs. Sewell.

"Then you will come into your cousins."

"This instant, and talk to them all. I will convince Mrs. Bailey that I am not a niceish girl—assure Mrs. Weston that I will give myself as many airs as I please; and tell Miss Bailey that she is the dullest of the dull—the most commonplace of the commonplace."

"My dear Rosalind, you will never think of such a thing! You cannot be in earnest," exclaimed Mrs. Sewell, catching hold of her arm to detain her.

"Not in earnest, my dear Mrs. Sewell. Why should you think me otherwise?"

"Now, Rose, now do consider," pleaded poor Mrs. Sewell in an agony. "Mrs. Denham is there—what will she think?"

"That I know how to defend myself from false accusations."

"Oh! Rose, I entreat you to consider: I ought never to have told you what was said."

"No, that is the thing, Mrs. Sewell; it was a great breach of confidence in you—a most unwise disclosure," cried the laughing Rosalind.

"You should not never asked me."

"Oh! Mrs. Sewell, you are like the rest of the world, doing wrong and then trying to lay the blame on another."

"Well, Rose, I know I was in fault," said Mrs. Sewell humbly. "It is a singular coincidence that where you are concerned I am always doing wrong, and it was just the same when I tried to serve your mother."

"A very singular coincidence indeed," observed Rosalind, trying to look grave.

"But you will not take advantage of my folly, and get me into a scrape, Rose," said Mrs. Sewell coaxingly. "You know it was all my affection for you that led me into this error, so you must not let out that I have repeated what was said. Promise me that."

"And keep the promise as well as you kept yours not to praise me?" asked Rosalind archly.

"I could not be silent then; but do promise to be prudent."

"Prudent indeed! Am I not always prudent? Come along and see with what consummate wisdom I can act."

"Then you will not say anything, Rosa dear?" she urged holding her back.

"Not say anything! I intend to say a great deal," replied the merry Rosalind, looking so mischievous that poor Mrs. Sewell was in an

absolute fright. "Come along," she continued, drawing her towards the door.

"But, Rose my dear, do think!—Mrs. Denham there too! Do pray consider!"

"Oh, yes I am a person of great consideration," said Rosalind, bursting from her hold and flinging back as she reached the door a look of merry malice that completed Mrs. Sewell's embarrassment.

Rosalind forgot that others could see as well as her old friend, and as she turned again towards the drawing room her eye encountered Mrs. Denham's steady gaze. Colouring slightly, but without making any remark she passed on direct to the work table round which most of the guests were assembled.

"Do give me a seat by you, Miss Weston, and shield me from cruel Mrs. Sewell's tyranny?" she began, taking a chair beside her beautiful, but inanimate cousin.

"Me cruel!" stammered poor Mrs. Sewell, giving herself up for lost, "I am sure—"

"And I am sure too, Mrs. Sewell, that you have been causing me to endure the torments of Tantalus," interposed Rosalind with another mischievous glance. "You place a fascinating book in my hands, and as soon as every faculty is enchained by its beauties, you insist on my leaving it, telling me that I am rude and unsociable to sit reading alone, instead of working German wools in company. I appeal to you, Miss Weston, whether this is not being very cruel."

"One cannot read all day," replied the lovely Maria, who had no turn for study.

"No, to be sure not," said Mrs. Sewell, catching at her words. "Reading long together makes one round shouldered and stupid."

"Do not say a word, Mrs. Sewell, or I will have my revenge, and tell—you know what. Then what must I do, my beautiful cousin?"

"Come and work with us."

"But suppose I cannot. Suppose I should

prick my fingers and make my violets red, carnations blue."

"You would soon learn better," replied Maria, taking her *au pied de la lettre*. "Shall I teach you?"

"Will you also give me patience to learn?"

"Don't heed what she says; she can work very well," said Mrs. Sewell, with an imploring gesture, meant to intimate that Mrs. Denham was displeased.

"Do not provoke me," cried Rosalind, holding up her finger. "If you do—I will—"

"What?" asked Mrs. Weston.

"Work her in the centre of an ottoman with a gentleman on his knees before her—she blushing celestial, rosy red."

"You may do that if you like," said Mrs. Sewell greatly relieved.

"You are ambitious, I perceive—desirous of being immortalised by my needle. What a beautiful group of flowers, Mrs. Weston, nearly

as perfect as your daughter's. And very pretty birds, Mrs. Bailey," continued Rosalind, going the round of the work table, and bestowing praise on the labours of each, a praise richly deserved.

"You have not examined and lauded my work," remarked Mrs. Denham, "come and say how you like it."

Thus summoned, Rosalind was compelled to look and comment, praise she could not in sincerity, for the pattern was frightful.

"Do not you think it very pretty?" asked Mrs. Denham with more animation than usual, looking up in her face as she spoke.

"It is very nicely worked," answered Rosalind.

"But the pattern? Don't you like the pattern?"

"You will acquit me of rudeness, I hope, if I admit that the pattern is not to my taste: I should have preferred blue to green in that

part," said Rosalind politely, but with no show of a wish to win her favor.

"I am working for an old friend who prefers this pattern to all others."

"That is more than sufficient: affection hallows all it touches," answered Rosalind warmly.

"I am surprised at your not liking it, Miss Trevor," observed Mrs. Weston, before Mrs. Denham could reply. "Maria and I think it so particularly pretty; but there, tastes differs, and I suppose it is all the better that it should be so. I have always remarked that the opinions of those brought up in town differ entirely from those brought up in the country. Taste seems to require cultivation as much as manner," added the speaker in what she considered a philosophical tone, fitted for such a philosophical remark.

"Or carrots and onions," observed Rosalind with an assumption of gravity that set most of

her hearers laughing, much to Mrs. Weston's annoyance.

"Manners should be formed on the most perfect models, which are only to be found in the highest society," again observed Mrs. Weston with some hauteur, a slight acquaintance with an old baroness, and a new countess, constituting her, in her own estimation, an unerring judge of elegance. "Manners should be highly polished."

"Like the best drawing-room fire irons, rubbed, scrubbed, and oiled, till all is smooth and slippery," added Miss Trevor.

"You have very original similes," remarked Mrs. Weston, uncertain whether Rosalind were laughing at her or not.

"So I flatter myself," replied Miss Trevor carelessly, taking up a piece of canvass that lay before Anne Weston, a sickly looking girl about sixteen years of age. "Not one stitch! How idle! Perhaps you can come and play with me then."

"I am waiting till mamma or Maria can begin it for me," replied the timid girl, who, being very shy, and no favorite with her mother, rarely spoke but when spoken to.

"Like the boy in the child's tale, as every body else is busy I conclude I must be busy too. Suppose I arrange the pattern for you," said Rosalind good-naturedly.

"I should be so much obliged to you."

"Now then for pricking my fingers," cried Rosalind, seating herself on a stool at the shy girl's feet.

The pattern was soon arranged and began, Miss Trevor talking so gaily the while to those around her, that they looked in surprise at each other, wondering why they had fancied that she gave herself airs.

"Now I must have a walk for a reward. Who will join me?" asked Rosalind after working diligently for some time.

"Oh. I--I--I," cried all the young ladies,

covering up their slippers and ottomans, and then leaving the room to equip themselves for the expedition.

"You are a good girl," said Mrs. Sewell, encountering Rosalind on the stairs, as she was descending with bonnet and scarf. "You have been making yourself very agreeable; and even Mrs. Weston, who is certainly jealous of you, is obliged to admit that you are more amiable than she at first imagined."

"And all because I praised her work, and showed some little skill in tentstitch, and talking lively common-place."

"Well, my dear, I hope you will be as good-natured again."

"I was not at all good-natured, except to poor Anne, whom her mother snubs. There was mischief in my mind all the time, and as for liking my cousins better—do not suppose it. I wonder how Mrs. Denham can find pleasure in the society of those so inferior to her in

elegance and intellect. I was indifferent to them before; and now I despise them—at least some of them. Won by praise of cross-stitch and embroidery! Don't suppose that I can sit morning after morning counting six here and eight there, putting in my needle and pulling it out again; I shall require an enormous deal of rubbing, scrubbing, and oiling, before I shall be polished enough to please Mrs. Weston."

"No, Rosalind, no: you require no scrubbing and rubbing; your manners were always considered elegant; and you will soon tame down a little, and then you will become a general favorite."

"I have no fancy to become a general favorite; and as for taming down—who or what is to tame me?"

"Oh! love, my dear. When you fall in love, you will be quite a different creature."

"Fall in love to tame me down!" cried Rosalind laughing. "That would be like

setting the house on fire to cure a smoky chimney. No no :—

> " Bound to none my fortunes be,
> This or that man's fall I fear not;
> *Her* I love that loveth me;
> And for the rest— a pin I care not."

"Ah Captain Right has not come yet," observed Mrs. Sewell, who never sought originality in her remarks.

"He must be a General at the least with a whole army at his back to conquer and tame me," cried the merry Rosalind.

The day was fine—the grounds picturesque—the heat not oppressive—and Rosalind chatted so gaily with her young cousins that they pronounced her to be a very amusing person, though Mrs. Weston and Miss Bailey added in their own minds, not so beautiful, and not such a fine singer as Edred Cottrell tried to make people believe.

As the party were still some distance from the

house they were espied by the gentlemen returning from the fair, who galloping across the park, and throwing the reins to their grooms, with the exception of Mr. Bailey, proposed themselves as escorts to the young ladies.

"You looked very striking and graceful seen through the trees," said Rupert Wyvill with animation.

"Do you mean to say that we looked otherwise on a nearer approach, when no longer screened from keen inspection by intervening branches?" asked Rosalind gaily.

"We cannot gaze on the sun save through some dulling medium—its radiance is too great for our weak vision," answered Rupert gallantly, shading his eyes as if dazzled by a blaze of light.

"There, Miss Trevor! you challenged a compliment, and you have it. I told you Wyvill could fence well, and that was very prettily said," observed Mr. Adnam rubbing his hands—a constant habit when pleased.

"Very prettily said! and so perfectly original!" replied Rosalind with a blush, and a slight curling of her beautifully chisselled lip.

"There is nothing new under the sun! Who shall gainsay Solomon?" answered Rupert a little hurt as she fancied at her remark.

"Heigh ho! so it seems we ladies are to be compared to the sun, the moon, and all the stars from this time forth for evermore: old compliments, like old clothes are only fit to be thrown aside, or sold to the Jews:—I am weary of them."

"Capricious as well as weary I fear, Miss Trevor. Do you quarrel with being compared to one of the heavenly bodies?" asked Rupert.

"It is all very well for *galls* to say so; but we know that you all like compliments if possible better than fine clothes and rich husbands," observed Richard Weston, who was by no means as *recherché* in language or ideas as his

mamma desired—others called him rude, rough, and rather coarse.

"The *galls* will of course allow you to be a competent judge on such points," said Rosalind, pronouncing girls as Richard always pronounced it.

"Well, the *galls* do like flattery—don't they Wyvill?"

"Doubtless when administered by Mr. Richard Weston."

"You mean to laugh at me because I am not much given to such things; but I don't mind that, nor the *galls* either. They do not care from whom the flummery comes—so that it comes."

"Flummery is very melting," observed Edred Cottrell.

"Well, I am sure I do not like flattery and compliment," said Miss Bailey.

"Not when administered by Mr. Richard Weston?"

"No, that I am sure I don't; for he never thinks of any thing but his horses."

"And himself," added Edred.

"Well, to be sure."—

> "Of my father's children I'm the best,
> So I'll guard myself—nor heed the rest."

"That is the way to get on in this world, Miss Trevor, you may depend upon it."

"And in the next too?" asked Rosalind gravely, disgusted with his selfishness; for it was not said in jest, but acted on in earnest.

"Oh! that is a great way off; and no one has ever returned to tell us anything about it."

"Heaven forefend! I have no wish to see a ghost," said Mr. Adnam.

"I should like to question one from the unknown world if it could be," remarked Rupert Wyvill. "Should not you, Miss Trevor?"

"Not if the spirit could only tell me where to have my soiled dress dyed and cleaned as in the famous tale of Drelincourt."

"Perhaps you are contented with the present."

"The present company of course," observed Edred Cottrell.

"I will say nothing on that point, not possessing Mr. Richard Weston's talent for compliment," answered Rosalind with a playful shrug of the shoulders.

"Then to say that you were contented with the present company you would consider flattery," said Rupert.

"You say so for me."

"Nay, Miss Trevor, you said, or insinuated as much yourself."

"Did I? And you are inclined to run a tilt in defiance of my opinion. So be it then. Do you vouch for the perfection of the whole party, or only for yourself?"

"I only maintain the perfection of Miss Trevor."

"The lady must first accept you as her knight," answered Rosalind a little loftily, for

she liked not his tone of gallantry, and smile of conscious power, as in her prejudice, she always interpreted it.

"You are hard hearted, Miss Trevor, and deserve to be overthrown in person, or by proxy," observed Mr. Adnam. "Never heed her, Wyvill! wear her colours, whether she bestow them or not; and compel her to be grateful. I will be your esquire."

"Let me be your champion," said Edred.

"Oh! certainly, and maintain the superiority of Miss Weston."

"Nay, if it is a matter of rivalship between ladies, I intermeddle not," replied Edred laughing.

"Very wisely resolved:—

> "He who 'twixt dames will interpose,
> The length of woman's nails soon knows,"

exclaimed Richard Weston with a rude laugh.

"You must succumb, fair coz; for you will

obtain no champion on these terms," said Edred.

"What say you, Miss Weston, to our joining forces and defying all recreant knights? I should have no hope were we rivals, so let us be friends," said Rosalind, and so good naturedly too, that the petted beauty forgot every former feeling of jealousy as she expressed her acquiescence in the arrangement.

"We need not be alarmed; such alliances never last long, and we shall be called on to play umpires within the week," observed Edred.

"Have you brought me the fairing you promised?" asked Miss Bailey, tired of a conversation, which inferred the superiority of others.

"Yes: here is a gingerbread husband," replied Edred, producing one as he spoke.

"I do not know what you mean by this impertinence; I am sure I am not so anxious for a husband," cried the affronted Miss Bailey.

"Impertinence! Is this all your gratitude

for the trouble I took in procuring you such a nice husband. You do not deserve him, and I will give him to somebody else," said Edred laughing at her offended air. "You shall have it, Jemima," offering it to her sister.

"No indeed; I am not going to take Elizabeth's leavings;—I am quite as particular as she is."

"Poor fellow! what is to be done for him? This is the way we miserable men are rejected by you fair damsels."

"Give him to me," said Rosalind, "I know one ready to accept him."

"Thank you, sweet coz; I shall come to you when I need a wife, since you are so kind hearted in these matters."

"And expect the same fate," answered Rosalind laughing, as she gave part of the gingerbread to a fine newfoundland puppy that had been watching it with eager eyes.

"Given to the dogs!—and serves you right for trusting any gall," exclaimed Richard Wes-

ton, who was more than usually bitter against the sex, having been cut by a fair flirt not two hours since in the presence of a richer beau.

"I am sure he deserves it, he is so very grateful," said Rosalind, amused at the manner with which the dog received it from her hands. "I did not know you had such a handsome favorite, Mr. Cottrell."

"It is not mine but Wyvill's, who no doubt feels highly flattered by your caressing his pet. 'Love me love my dog.'"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Wyvill; I did not know that the puppy was yours."

"Or you would not have fed him," observed Rupert in a tone between question and assertion.

"Oh, no!" replied Rosalind quickly, vexed with herself for this quickness the moment after.

"There, Wyvill! you are out of favor," exclaimed Edred with a laugh.

"I was never in."

"And do not deserve to be, bringing no fairings for the ladies, and thinking only of selling horses. Whilst I shall be the pet of the evening—the lord of the ascendant. Shall I not, fair Rosalind?" he questioned, offering her some very delicious looking gingerbread.

"You know of old that I cannot resist such a temptation," answered his cousin, helping herself as she spoke.

"You shall not carry all before you, Cottrell, I am resolved. Here Wyvill, do you open a rival shop," cried Mr. Adnam, giving him some bon-bons to offer to Rosalind.

"Thank you, sir; but you had better present them yourself; they will be more acceptable from you," said Rupert drawing back.

"Psha, man! never heed a rebuff, only try again. You won't?—well then I will. Taste my bon-bons, Miss Trevor, and admit their superiority over Cottrell's trumpery gingerbread. Real French bon-bons!"

"Good old English gingerbread!" cried

Edred in emulation. "As a patriot, you must give me the preference."

"As a liberal minded person ready to admire perfection wherever found you will decide in my favor," said Mr. Adnam.

"Gingerbread nuts or sugar plums—which are you for?" asked Rupert.

"I am too fond of both, to give a preference to either," said Rosalind; "so there shall be two favorites for to-night instead of one."

"You seem very merry," remarked Mrs. Sewell, as the walkers joined the other ladies on the lawn.

"Yes, very merry indeed. There has been a sharp encounter of tongues between Miss Trevor and Wyvill; and when my cousin Rosalind quarrels or jests she is equally enchanting. I only wish she were always in the fancy to be amusing."

"What scandal are you reporting of me, cousin Edred?" asked Rosalind advancing.

"No scandal, I was only asserting that you

had been very amusing for the last half hour; and regretting that you were not always in the mood to be equally bewitching."

"By which you mean to hint that I am capricious, and given to fancies and conceits. What call you that but scandal?"

"Nay, cousin Rosa, if you put me on my defence, I must maintain that it is no scandal, unless truth is a scandal. This morning you were in a gloomy temper, silent and unsociable —now you are gay, conversible, and friendly."

"To follow out a late comparison—does the sun always shine as at mid-day?"

"That is exactly what I would say; you are not always in full splendour;—sometimes rising—sometimes setting."

"You forget that this is a mere *façon de parler;* and that the sun remains the same, its difference of appearance depending on the difference in position of those who gaze upon it."

"That just bears out my assertion, that

your gaiety depends on your position. If you fancy those around, you are the most delightful, fascinating being in existence."

"You are reasoning on false grounds, cousin Edred. The sun is the same let who will behold it—the fault of a wrong judgment rests with the beholder. The sun does not shine from caprice or partiality."

"Nor does Rosalind Trevor—is that what you would say? Does she mean that she looks on all alike? that she loves none better than others? I did not think so poorly of her.—She who loves all—loves none."

"This is an erroneous interpretation of my words," began Rosalind.

"I am very sorry, my dear cousin, if my interpretation does not meet your wishes; but I never was clever at definitions, so must pray you to excuse me. I merely intended to say that I liked you merry better than dull; and that I was glad you had abandoned your unsociable mood of the morning, and approved

of your companions sufficiently to be agreeable."

"Rosalind has been very agreeable all the morning," said Mrs. Sewell triumphantly; "working and talking with the best of us."

"I am delighted to hear it;—this is just as it should be—just as I would have it. You know I maintained this morning that my cousin could be agreeable if she chose it. Do try some of my gingerbread, Mrs. Sewell; the young ladies proclaim it excellent. And you too, Mrs. Denham, will you not try it? And you Mrs. Bailey, I shall be quite affronted if you do not all take a piece; and then I will tell you Mrs. Sewell what I saw at the fair. First there were wild beasts, and wilder looking keepers—men that grinned with a horse collar—and women that grinned without—a cat with six legs, and a women with none:—A pony that told you every thing—and a fortune-teller that told you nothing. Giants and dwarfs—tumblers and dancers—and the

greatest wonder of all—a silent woman! Bless me! there is the dressing bell; and my hair is out of curl—'so fare ye well my ladies gay'—or I shall not have time to make myself an Adonis by dinner."

"Did you sell your horse?" asked the good-natured Mrs. Bailey as he was flying off.

"No; cruel creature to remind a man of his misfortunes! I was too honest—I told that it had been lame, so no one would buy it, whilst Wyvill sold his at once for a good price—more than he gave for it."

"Remember that I bought it some years ago out of condition: the readiness with which it was purchased proved that the price was not exorbitant," answered Rupert gravely.

"That is a matter of judgment, or want of judgment; I would not have given it, for I am sure it has been, or will be lame."

"Certainly not whilst in my possession though most probably it will be before its death. The grapes are sour;—you wanted it at a lower price."

"I did not want it at that price undoubtedly. But if such a perfect animal, as you report, why part with it at all?"

"Because I find keeping two horses sufficiently expensive."

"Two horses expensive to a man of your fortune! Why you are turning miser, Wyvill. But there, if saving is your taste I have nothing to say against it, only you sold the horse uncommonly well—that is all. Some people are always in luck!" and so saying, away went Edred Cottrell to dress for dinner.

CHAPTER VI.

"I have been seeking you every where, Rosalind, to say how vexed I was at being parted from you at dinner," said Edred Cottrell, joining his cousin as she was sauntering along a shady walk, now stopping to listen to the singing of the birds—now turning to note the effect of the sun beams glading through the overhanging branches. "I thought I should find you apart from the vulgar herd, indulging in one of your delightful, pensive moods—revelling in your own high thoughts:—one can-

not support the commonplace all day. I suspect you found Wyvill heavy as a neighbour."

"One of my delightful, pensive moods—I thought you lauded me for being merry not long ago."

"You are enchanting in all moods, sweet Rosalind; it is the variety—the originality of your character, that lends you your greatest charm."

"How many glasses of claret have you taken, cousin Edred?"

"What—are you latin scholar enough to understand that in vino veritas?"

"I have heard it quoted sufficiently often to guess its meaning; but cannot see the application to my question."

"Then you are duller of comprehension than I ever knew you. Wine has inspired me with the spirit of truth."

"Rather, I fear, with the spirit of falsehood."

"I spoke the simple truth; but modesty

knows not its own worth. Let us sit down beneath this spreading beech, and admire those majestic birds, gliding with such a stately motion over the glassy lake."

"They are floating double—swan and shadow," replied Rosalind with emphasis.

"Yes, see! the shadow is a perfect resemblance of the substance; so are my words of my thoughts."

"Are they?" observed Rosalind incredulously.

"On my honor!—you cannot doubt me?"

"You think with Mr. Richard Weston, that girls like flummery and compliment."

"I feel that I cannot flatter Rosalind Trevor; the wildest burst of enthusiasm could not outspeak her worth."

"Do you expect me to believe all this?" asked Rosalind looking him steadily in the face.

"Why not, when I speak the truth?"

"When you speak the truth I may believe you."

"I speak it now."

"Psha! cousin Edred; I am not such a vain old crow as to believe that I sing divinely because a fox may tell me so. It would answer your purpose better if you gentlemen would be a little less lavish of your compliments; we should prize them all the more; at least, I have heard too many to heed them any longer, though yours are rather poetically turned, I must allow."

"I concluded you to be in a poetical mood from finding you here."

"Then for once you are mistaken—I am not in a poetical mood."

"A cynical one it appears."

"Exactly so."

"But wherefore?"

"Ask yourself?"

"My dear Rosalind, how could I help not sitting next you at dinner? You know I was called away at the moment, and Mr. Adnam made Wyvill take the place. I tried in vain to

talk to you across the table—you would not keep up a conversation."

"Do not suppose that I am in a cynical mood because Mr. Cottrell was not beside me."

"Then I can imagine no other cause; forgive my presumption for fixing upon that."

"No cause?—think again."

"No; no cause—you must enlighten me. If I have offended you, name my offence, and it shall be repaired."

"Fairly promised,"

"The promise shall be fairly kept. What is all this?" he demanded in a changed tone. "We were such good friends at Ivy Cottage; entering into a league offensive and defensive."

"Precisely; you act on the offensive, and I am thus compelled to adopt the defensive."

"I act on the offensive!--and to you Rosalind! How? where? and when? You are more obscure than the Delphic Oracle."

"There shall be no obscurity—I will speak plainly; deal with me as I deal with you.

Recall to your mind all that has passed since my arrival. When have we conversed together in the presence of others that you have not managed, by word or look, to twist my expressions into something displeasing to Mrs. Denham or her guests? And this not merely once, or twice, or thrice. No protestations, cousin Edred; but hear me to the end. To use for once the elegant phraseology of Mr. Richard Weston, I have not entered for the Denham stakes, nor do I intend to do so, unless provoked thereto by a spirit of mischief or revenge: —your crossing and jostling me in my quiet course therefore is not only unkind but impolitic.—There, now I have had my say; and you may have yours."

"What can you mean?" said Edred, fixing his falcon gaze upon her.

"Just what I say;—no more, and no less," answered Rosalind, meeting that falcon gaze without shrinking. "You cannot be unconscious of the impression conveyed by your

words; and therefore I ask you are we to be friends—or foes? I hate hollow truces and will have none of them."

"Friends, or foes, Rosalind?—what a question! Friends to be sure! How can you pain me by such a doubt! Earth boasts no gaud that could tempt me to—"

"Do not play sentimental, Mr. Cottrell; I am not in the humour for it now," replied Rosalind impatiently. "You are no simpleton to use words without meaning; and no blind craftsman not to mark the working of those words. On your future conduct depends the terms on which we stand."

"I comprehend you now; but you do not—you cannot suppose that those words were intended to do mischief? You cannot believe that I would purposely prejudice any one against you! You know my unhappy faculty of saying just what I should not. Do not blame me so severely for a natural defect."

"A natural defect!—repeated Rosalind almost unconsciously.

"You judge me harshly, cousin; you think I ought to have corrected this fault; and so I ought," he added looking down for an instant. "I could have bitten off my tongue with vexation the other evening, when Mrs. Denham came up so inopportunely, for I saw that she was vexed."

"That was not the only occasion, where your tongue has done me harm with her and others; but I have no wish to enumerate instances. Your own observation should convince you that I am not likely to cross your views; and therefore it is but waste of time and talent to make my visit here unpleasant by persuading my cousins young and old that I am any thing but the merry, heedless girl you know me to be. No denials—nor pretty speeches—no flowery sentiments—are we to be friends? Give me a simple answer—yes—or no."

"Yes, most assuredly! I would say more than friends, but that I fear your wilful humour might take offence. You have con-

demned me on suspicion—my future conduct shall prove those suspicions to have been unfounded."

"I hope so."

"You may be certain that it shall be so," he replied, gazing with admiration on her beauty, heightened by the excitement of her late conversation; and the air of graceful, womanly command which so well became her.

"Suppose we return to the house, or join Mrs. Bailey and her daughters, who are strolling to the right," observed Rosalind abruptly as if to avoid the possibility of further discourse on a subject pleasing to neither.

"Nay, grant me a few minutes *tête à tête;* we shall have the Baileys the whole evening. How will you endure their folly, and the insipidity of Maria Weston for two months?"

"I do not know," answered Rosalind in a doleful tone, for she was already heartily weary of her cousins. "But Michael will be

here in a week, and in the mean time you must be very amusing."

"I will do my best; and you must fill up the intervals by quarrelling with Wyvill, in which I will second you."

"Two to one! no that would not be generous. You shall make love to Maria; I should like to ascertain what changes feeling could effect in the expression of those perfect features."

"I would as soon make love to an iceberg."

"Nay, she is not cold, only cool;—not freezing, only inaminate; moreover she is gentle and good tempered, and far happier I doubt not than if she had quicker feelings."

"Very philosophically argued. Does Rosalind Trevor wish to resemble her?"

"No, she would rather be that bird flitting so lightly through the air. It must be very delightful to fly."

"You have flights of fancy already in which I would fain be your companion. But here come the Baileys; so adieu to poetry and

common sense. We have been waiting for you, Miss Bailey; here is plenty of room on this bench for all."

"Oh, dear no, Mr. Cottrell; I would not disturb a *tête à tête* on any account."

"Perhaps you prefer enjoying one," he replied glancing at Richard Weston, who was by her side, initiating her into the mysteries of slang. "You will take a seat, Mrs. Bailey, I am sure; for you look tired. Do stop a minute to admire the swans, as Miss Trevor has been doing."

"Not now, thank you; it is getting late."

It was getting late, and the whole party returned to the house falling in with most of the other guests on their way back.

"How well the old house looks at the termination of this vista," remarked Rupert Wyvill.

"Yes; I wonder how it would look worked in German wool," replied Maria Weston.

"Admirable! persuade Mr. Wyvill to draw

the pattern," said Rosalind, trying to look grave, whilst Edred laughed outright.

"Will you work it if I do?"

"No; but Miss Weston will; and she can put you and herself in the foreground sorting the wools."

"A capital idea! And we will have an engraving of the piece," cried Edred.

"I will turn it over to you who are such a famous hand at forming designs, and putting them into practice," said Wyvill.

"I have a design at present on the tea and bread and butter, if that is what you mean, and challenge you to outdo me."

"I have no hope of outdoing you in any design," answered Rupert pointedly.

"I admire your humility," observed Edred, walking away; but returning again in a few minutes bringing a nosegay "Accept of this as a *gage d'amitié*," he said presenting it to Rosalind, who smiled her assent.

Edred Cottrell kept his word. He rattled

on as before—he got Wyvill and others into scrapes by his wild talk, but never once was Rosalind compromised by word or look:—on the contrary, he did all he could to raise her in Mrs. Denham's estimation, pointing out her talents, graces and virtues to that lady, not in his former extravagant style, but in the manner most likely to create a favorable impression on his hearer, whilst Rosalind on her part smiled at his sallies, and allowed him to engross the greater part of her conversation; so much so indeed that those who piqued themselves on their penetration began to hint at a wedding. Mrs. Denham we have already said was a dull hostess:—she neither talked herself nor set others talking; and but for Edred and Rosalind this family party would have been even more stupid than family parties generally are.

To sit all day at tentstitch was beyond Rosalind's patience, but she usually spent some part of the morning in the same room with the other guests, filling up some sketches made of

Denham Park; and Edred was often at her side, laughing, praising, or criticising as the humour chanced.

Rosalind sang and played good naturedly when ever asked; but Mrs. Denham appeared to notice neither her gaiety, nor her gravity—her singing nor her drawing—generally absenting herself, according to custom, from breakfast till luncheon, and often till dinner.

All things went on in their usual routine. Mrs. Weston brought forward her eldest daughter's superior beauty and elegance whenever she could—Mrs. Bailey praised with her usual liberality—Mrs. Sewell found singular coincidences in the commonest every day occurrences—Rupert Wyvill, still languid from his late illness, read and thought more than he talked—Terry Weston arranged his stock, whiskers and curls more carefully than ever, some thought with the view of exciting Rosalind's admiration—whilst his younger brother, in spite of his mother's lectures, instructed all

who chose to listen in the delicacies of slang and stable language.

As the young people were all cousins in a sort of a way (we are not going to make out whether fourth, fifth, or sixth—there were none nearer than second once removed) the freedom of relationship soon grew up among them, and the formal Mr. and Miss were discarded, save with regard to Rosalind and Rupert, who never addressed each other by their christian names, indeed rarely spoke but to engage in a sharp encounter of wits, in which sometimes one had the advantage, sometimes the other. Rosalind and Edred were the life of the house, and all being satisfied from her conduct towards Mrs. Denham that the former had no idea of propitiating their hostess, in the hope of becoming her heiress, intead of being regarded with envy or aversion, as at first, she stood some chance of finally becoming, what she had protested against, a general favorite. Not that Rosalind sought popularity; but being very lively and

always willing to oblige, she could not fail to please when seen with unprejudiced eyes.

"I am going to C. this morning to make some purchases; and as you only stayed there about ten minutes in your way hither, perhaps, Miss Trevor, you would like to accompany me, and see something of the town," said Mrs. Denham one morning at breakfast—she never called her Rosalind.

"It is very kind of you to remember my taste for seeing every thing; but you will not I hope think me ungrateful if I decline availing myself of your offer," answered Rosalind after a moment's silence, caused by surprise. "I expect my brother at twelve, and as I have not seen dear Michael for nearly a year, I should not like to delay our meeting even one single instant."

"That is nonsense, Rose; it cannot matter your seeing him an hour or two later," said Mrs. Sewell, fussing, fidgeting, and making

signs to her favorite that she ought to go, which provoked Rosalind, and did not escape the observation of Mrs. Denham.

"A delay of two or three hours in meeting an only brother after so long a parting not matter, Mrs. Sewell! How can you say so?" exclaimed Rosalind warmly, heedless of the frowns and signs of her old friend. "Why I think every minute an age till I see him; and he might feel my absence an unkindness."

"I fear we brothers are not quite as romantic in our regard as you may imagine; but then few have such a sister," observed Edred gazing with admiration on the animated speaker, every feature lit with the glow of affection.

"This is so girlish: you will grow wiser as you grow older," remarked Mrs. Sewell pettishly.

"If you mean, my dear Mrs. Sewell that I

shall grow cold in my age, and cease to love those I love now, I hope I shall never grow old;—I would rather die young."

"You are a very affectionate sister," observed Mrs. Bailey.

"I wish mine were as affectionate; they would not care if they never saw me again, or weep if I went to the dogs," grumbled Richard Weston.

"I am sure you have no right to say so; Maria has a most affectionate heart, but brothers always think it fashionable to abuse their sisters," said his mother. "My eldest daughter, my dear Mrs. Denham, will be delighted to accompany you; she was talking this morning of one or two purchases she wished to make."

"Then she had better put on her bonnet at once, for I expect the carriage round immediately," replied Mrs. Denham, not the expression of a feature, not the variation of a

tone, showing whether she was pleased or displeased at this change of companion.

Rupert Wyvill had said nothing, but his eye had been fixed on Rosalind's face as she spoke, though she had not observed it.

"My dear Rosalind, how could you refuse to accompany Mrs. Denham to C.?" said Mrs. Sewell reproachfully, following her favorite from the room.

"My dear Mrs. Sewell, how could you think of frowning and making signs?—it is so vulgar," replied Rosalind laughing.

"My dear Rose, will you never consider? Denham Park is a fine place."

"Yes that it is; I am beginning to feel an affection for it."

"Well then do endeavour to please my old friend, and be as agreeable to her as you are to others."

"There is no well then in the case, dear Minny; and depend upon it, I should not

laugh and jest so lightly if I entertained the deep design of becoming an heiress; and so every one else perceives but you, and hence their politeness. If I started for the prize, I should reawaken all the envy, hatred, and malice, that greeted me on my first arrival; and perhaps awaken them in myself too. No, no; I will keep a light heart, unwrung by the torment of legacy hunting. It is of no use to shake your head and prepare notes for a lecture, I won't be scolded this morning. I am expecting Mike—dear Mike!—and will keep my mood all sunshine to welcome him as he should be welcomed."

"You are so wild, Rosalind," said Mrs. Sewell, cheated out of half her vexation by her favorite's smiles.

"Yes, yes, dear Minny; not tamed down by love yet—and not likely to be," cried the merry girl giving her old friend a kiss.

"Whither are you going in such haste, you madcap?"

"To find out from which window I can see farthest up the road, and there to station myself," answered Rosalind, springing up the old oak staircase all the quicker, and with a more glowing cheek, from discovering that Rupert Wyvill was observing her, and might have been so doing for some moments.

The window of Mrs. Weston's room chanced to command the most extended view, so there did Rosalind take her station a full three quarters of an hour before the appointed time, refusing to let Mrs. Sewell share her watch, on the plea that she was too restless and impatient to prove an agreeable companion. To read was impossible—so she employed herself in making a wool housewife, as she called it, for Anne, who slighted and snubbed by her family from being sickly, shy, and awkward, was most grateful for the considerate kindness shown her by Rosalind. But even this was laid aside when the deep toned clock above the entrance chimed the third quarter after

eleven; and her eyes became more constantly fixed on the road that led up to the house; yet not so constantly but that she observed the movements of a horseman, standing on an eminence on the other side of the park.

"No, he is not coming yet," she murmured, after looking steadfastly for some minutes towards the lodge; then turning her attention to that solitary horseman her speculations took for a time another direction.

"Surely that is Mr. Wyvill," she thought, shading her eyes with her hand, that she might see the more distinctly. "What can he be doing? And he has been there these ten minutes or more—yet he scarcely stirs. He cannot be taking a sketch on horseback. And now he comes towards the house at full speed, leaping flakes, and ha ha—everything that comes in his way. Has there been any accident?" was her last thought, as, without slackening his speed, he made directly for the window from which she was now leaning anxiously out.

"Your brother is coming—I see his stanhope on the hill above the park," cried Rupert Wyvill, reining up his horse immediately beneath.

"And you have been watching for me? How kind, how very kind!" said Rosalind with a look of gratitude that would have repaid a watch and gallop of double length. "How far off is he? How soon will he be here?" she questioned eagerly.

"He will be here in about ten minutes I judge, from his present rate of speed."

"I think I see him there, through the trees," said Rosalind leaning forth from the casement towards the lodge.

But not towards the lodge was Rupert's look directed—his gaze was fixed on a white rose that loosened from her belt by her sudden movement fell on his upturned brow.

"May I keep this as my guerdon?" he questioned.

"Oh! that is faded:—you shall have a fresher and prettier one—one of those that I picked for Michael," she replied, flinging down a beautiful bud but half unfolded.

He caught it as it fell—pressed it to his lips with an animation he rarely exhibited; and then placed it in his bosom. Rosalind blushed; but the stanhope was now clearly in sight, and she was too eager to meet her brother to comment on this gallantry. She lingered at the casement till Michael was near enough to recognise and return the waving of her hand, then, bounding down the stairs she stood in the hall ready to receive him, too intent on her purpose to note that Edred Cottrell and Rupert Wyvill were already there.

The door stood open; and before the portly butler could reach it to receive the visitor, he had sprung from the stanhope, and catching Rosalind in his arms given her more than one brotherly kiss. The old man looked a little amazed at such an unceremonious greeting in

his sober misstress's hall—such a scene not having been enacted before in his memory, and then applied himself to the performance of his duties, declaring afterward in the house-keeper's room that it was one of the prettiest sights he had ever seen.

"Are you quite well, dear Michael? But I need not ask with that bright colour. And you are so handsome!" said Rosalind, gazing with mingled love and pride on the young officer.

"Am I to say the same to you, dear Rose? You certainly are looking very lovely just at present."

"Oh! never mind how I look; as long as you are well, and happy, and as affectionate as ever, I shall be happy too."

"Did you fancy that I should be less affectionate then?"

"No, I did not fancy it, but some people have been talking nonsense about the change wrought by the world in young men, particu-

larly young men in the army, where brothers are laughed out of their affection for their sisters."

"And did you believe this, Rose?"

"No: not a word, dear Mike. You did not think I should?"

"I trust not indeed, dear Rose; I should be a brute not to love you very dearly;—you who would, I know, make any sacrifice to ensure my happiness."

"That I would Mike; and count it no sacrifice at all."

"How are you, Trevor? I am very glad to see you," said Edred advancing to shake hands with his newly arrived cousin.

"Ah, Cottrell! how are you? But where is Mrs. Denham? I suppose I should go to her at once."

"She is at C. now and will not return till dinner time.'

"Have all the rest of our cousins accom-

panied her, leaving you and Cottrell to keep house ?"

"Oh! no, here is another cousin—Mr. Wyvill—whom you must help me thank. He gave me the first notice of your being in sight," said Rosalind, presenting her brother with all a sister's pride and affection.

"The rest of the family party are in the drawing room, at least the greater portion of them. Shall I marshal the way, and play master of the ceremonies," said Edred Cottrell.

"Yes do. Is it a dull family party?" asked young Trevor.

"It would be but for your sister and myself; we do all we can to enliven it."

"I have no doubt you do, and Rose could make a prison cheerful: I never have the blues when she is present."

"You would deserve to be marched through Coventry with Falstaff's ragged regiment at

your heels if you did. But come along, and I will introduce you."

The new comer was too handsome, gentlemanly, and good tempered, to be received uncourteously, though as a fresh candidate for the heirship he might otherwise have been frowned on; whilst Mrs. Sewell declared herself delighted at his arrival, wondering over and over again at the singular coincidence of their being together at Denham.

If Rosalind had looked proud of her brother whilst presenting him to Wyvill, she did not look less so whilst presenting him to Mrs. Denham, whose manner of receiving him was considered unusually gracious. His appearance was exceedingly prepossessing; and if he was deficient, as some said, in firmness and moral energy, it required a very acute observer to discover it on his first introduction; for there was no dulness in his speech, no languor in his movements.

Maria Weston seemed particularly struck with him, (more so than her mother desired, he having nothing but his pay) and gave herself a great deal of trouble in teaching him to sing duets with her, as he occasionally did with his sister.

"You are the very picture of happiness this evening, Miss Trevor; absolutely radiant with delight," said Mr. Adnam, approaching Rosalind as she was watching Michael take his first singing lesson from Maria.

"I cannot look more happy than I feel," answered Rosalind, who was a great favorite of that gentleman's.

"Ah! well; I like affection, and affection shown too. They are polishing, and polishing away in the present day till there is no nature left; or people are ashamed of showing it."

"Oh, fie! Mr. Adnam. If you praise me and abuse polish in the same breath, I must suppose that you think me an uncouth savage; and if you talk of the wonderful superiority of

former days, I must set you down as an old man. People never grumble as long as they are young and can enjoy; but when the power of enjoyment is dulled they take to abusing the present which no longer delights, and praising the superiority of the past when the sense of pleasure was more acute. For me, I intend to be young all my days, and declare that the world is fairer, wiser, better than in my childhood."

"How very good tempered happiness makes us," said Mr. Adnam smiling. "I was going to ask you to quarrel with Wyvill, for you alone can rouse him from the indolence that is creeping over him. There has he been with that book in his hand for the last half hour, speaking to no one;—but he is sauntering towards us now. You are come in right time, Wyvill; I have been persuading Miss Trevor to quarrel with you just to rouse you—indolent creature that you are!"

"And has Miss Trevor consented?" asked Rupert, turning an eagle glance upon her.

"No," said Rosalind, blushing at his eager manner. "I will not quarrel with you for three whole days. It was so very kind of you to watch for Michael."

"Hey day! What is this? Do you two mean to be particular friends? Because if so Wyvill will become as dreamy and inert as a dormouse."

"Oh, no! not particular friends—that can never be; Mr. Wyvill does not like a romp, and I do not like a smile and tone that say—I know my power;—but we will proclaim a truce for three days."

"No longer?" asked Rupert earnestly.

"That depends," replied Rosalind looking down.

"How smart you are with that rose in your button hole; I have not seen you so dandified since your arrival," remarked Mr. Adnam before Rupert could answer.

Rosalind raised her eyes. There was the rose which she had bestowed in the morning.

"Wyvill playing the puppy with bouquets, and what not!" exclaimed Edred, joining the group. "You will be sporting *favoris* and moustache next. Take my advice, and let them alone; Miss Highworth admires your dignified bearing and republican manner, so give up all idea of enacting the courtier."

"Miss Highworth does me much honor," said Rupert with one of those smiles against which Rosalind had just protested; but whether the smile was intended for the lady or Cottrell she could not determine.

"Is that all you say to a lady's approbation?" exclaimed Mr. Adnam. "Go and make love to her, man," he added, glancing at Miss Highworth, who was talking with Miss Bailey. "She has forty thousand pounds at her own disposal; and really is not ill looking. There go now—go."

"It is too much trouble; and I am so very

happy where I am," replied Rupert, taking a seat by Rosalind.

"You will think it too much trouble to eat soon, I do believe," observed Mr. Adnam pettishly. "You used to be a fine, active youth."

"Ay, in days gone by; but I am growing old now."

"Just four and twenty! Quite a grey beard certainly! Do read him a homily against indolence, Miss Trevor."

"You forget our truce, Mr. Adnam; and would never again say a word of his indolence had you seen how he galloped across the park this morning, leaping all impediments, to tell me that Michael was in sight."

"Is this true?" asked Mr. Adnam in surprise, whilst Edred Cottrell looked his amazement.

"The Cid and I were in a frisky mood, so indulged ourselves in a gallop," replied Rupert colouring slightly.

"I wish you were oftener in a frisky mood."

"Mrs. Denham will not echo that wish having been the sufferer from my friskiness, when, taking a leap without having previously acquainted myself with the *locale*, I plumped through a glass frame into a flower pit, unhappily crushing some favorite plants in my descent."

"And receiving some cuts in the adventure; I think you had the worst of the accident," remarked Mrs. Denham.

"Capital! oh, that I had been there to see!" cried Edred, laughing at the bare idea. "The dignified—the republican Rupert Wyvill, as Miss Highworth calls you, taking a fancy leap into a flower frame! What could induce you to perform such a feat?"

"I was not aware of the risk, and acted in ignorance; or from a sudden burst of spirits I suppose."

"From a feeling of kindness rather," obser-

ved Mrs. Sewell, who always told what good she knew of every body. "He was chasing a little bird belonging to Miss Eastlake, who was crying bitterly for the loss."

"I never heard this before," observed Mrs. Denham.

"Was Miss Eastlake pretty?" asked Edred wickedly.

"Very pretty," replied Mrs. Sewell simply.

Edred laughed. "Was she very grateful?"

"Yes, very grateful. I heard her speaking of it only two months since; and she always calls him her dear Mr. Wyvill."

"Wyvill is a lucky fellow; but you should not tell tales—see how he is blushing," observed Edred mischievously.

"Not blushing at the simple words of a girl of nine I conclude; if so, he must be most exceedingly given to blushing."

"Is Miss Eastlake only nine? How unfortunate! I had set my heart on a love tale, ending with a wedding."

"You made no such excuse at the time," remarked Mrs. Denham.

"Fearful of being scolded for her carelessness in losing the bird, she requested me not to tell; and you can all bear witness that I kept her secret."

"Did you catch the bird at last?" questioned Rosalind with considerable interest.

"Yes, after some little trouble."

"After some great trouble you should say. Besides tumbling into the flower frame, you had to climb two trees, and wade through a stream," said Mrs. Sewell.

"What a kind, good natured soul you must be," observed Mrs. Bailey.

Edred and others laughed at the oddity of the remark; and even Rupert himself could not forbear a smile.

"You are quite a Quixote, Wyvill, succouring distressed damsels. A perfect hero! But hush! Maria and Trevor are going to sing,"

said Edred Cottrell thus stopping the conversation.

"Put on your bonnet, Rosalind; I am going to drive you over to C. You lost a sight of its wonders for my sake I hear, so I am bound to make amends," said Michael to his sister on the following morning, immediately after breakfast.

"Thank you, dear Michael; but I shall be equally happy with you here; and I know you detest country towns."

"Put on your bonnet at once, and never dispute my will," replied her brother, trying to look the despot.

"Ah, me! There it is!—

> "If a brother you have he's the plague of your life,
> And will make you his slave quite as much as a wife."

sang the laughing Rosalind, as she left the room to equip herself.

"Now, Rose, I will tell you why I insisted on taking you to C. this morning," observed

her brother, as they drove along. "I am going to buy you a new gown."

"Buy me a new gown, Mike! thank you for the kind intention, but I really do not want one; and having brought me a brooch, and a chain, you cannot feel yourself called on to make me another present."

"You know nothing about it, Rosa; you do want a new dress, or rather new dresses. I overheard the Baileys, Mrs. Weston, and some other lady criticising your gown last night, and saying that you were a bad dresser."

"How rude of them, Michael; now I think I dress very well."

"They did not mean that you dressed in bad taste, but so plainly. They said you had not a handsome gown belonging to you."

"Not an expensive one certainly. Our income is too small to admit of my spending much money in finery, even if I desired it, which I do not."

"Never mind the income, I will give you the handsomest dress to be found in C."

"You shall do no such thing."

"Yes I will; I have no idea of Mrs. Weston's sneering at your plain muslin frock, as she called it."

"What harm will their sneering at my plain muslin frock do me? It is very rude in you not to think me beautiful in any dress," said Rosalind, hoping to turn him from his purpose.

"So I do, Rosa; you are the prettiest girl I know."

"Oh yes! Maria Weston is quite a fright to me," observed Rosalind archly.

"I do not say that, Rosa; but you are so different that a man may admire both."

"And love both? and marry both?"—she added still more archly. "In good truth, brother, I do not think your morals improved by your sojourn with the gallant 230th."

"Leave my morals to take care of themselves, Rosalind."

"Leave my dress to do the like."

"No, you must have the new gown; you dress too plainly as the Baileys say. Besides, I wish you to look particularly well when we dine at the Pearsons, for Ridgeway, will be there."

"What then? Am I to lose my heart to this said Mr. Ridgeway?"

"Captain Ridgeway if you please, Rosalind. He is one of ours; and I want him to see you look your best."

"So I am to be trotted out for his inspection—paraded for his pleasure. I have no intention of enlisting in yours (I believe that is the proper phrase) and will have no dress. Now don't be vexed, dear Michael; muslin will do very well for me. You have little besides your pay and much to buy with that little. You shall not run in debt to trick me out in finery."

"Oh! for the matter of debts, in for a penny, in for a pound."

"What do you mean, Michael? Surely you have not run in debt, after all my father's cautions and—?" she paused, not liking to add —former payment.

"I owe for my last suit of regimentals," he replied with assumed indifference.

"Oh! if only that, it does not signify."

"Signify!—to be sure not; you must have the gown, or I shall feel hurt."

Rosalind pleaded and argued but it would not do. Leaving her at the inn on the plea of business with the saddler, he purchased the dress, a very elegant figured white satin, and brought it back in triumph. Since the mischief was done, Rosalind, rather than vex him received his present with thanks.

"Remember we must be back by half past five to give us time to dress for dinner," said Rosalind, as they were sauntering about the town.

"Oh! the old lady can wait a little, or sit down without us."

"Neither will please her; she thinks a great deal of punctuality, and as you were not ready for breakfast this morning, you should make a point of being ready for dinner."

"I suppose I must, or the fat will be in the fire, and neither you nor I become possessor of Denham. By the way, how stands your chance? Are the odds in your favor?"

"I am out of the question;—so all feel, and hence their good-nature."

"Why so?"

"For two reasons; I am too independent to seek her favor, and offended her on my first arrival."

"Then I shall try my chance, since it will not interfere with you; and play up to the old lady, who is not so old after all being little more than sixty; and so strong and healthy that she may live to a hundred. She does not seem a very loveable sort of a person—too cold and formal for that. If I should coax her to

make me her heir you should be handsomely provided for—depend upon that."

"I will thank you at once for the intention, Mike, lest you should never have the opportunity of fulfilling it; and need not add that I will do all I may to promote your wishes."

"Who is her favorite at present?"

"Edred Cottrell I should say: most people like their contrast in temper, though not in tastes; but she shows no decided preference for any one."

"I must endeavour to inspire her with one for me."

These last words were not merely jest, for all that evening, and for several succeeding days did Michael Trevor play the pretty and polite to his hostess, not exactly complimenting her, but praising what she praised, and blaming what she blamed.

Mrs. Denham listened to, and answered his remarks with her usual cold politeness, but never sought his society; nay, occasionally, Rosalind

fancied, seemed a little weary of his conversation, which even in his fond sister's judgment was not remarkably intellectual. He was not a goose; but he had no talent, and was no reader; and had not Rosalind been blinded by affection she must have seen that a handsome person, gentlemanly manners, and much good humour were his greatest attractions. She was devoted to him—she doubted not his regard for her, and on this point she was not deceived: he loved his sister better than he loved any body but himself. There was no glaring selfishness in his conduct;—he would not have devoured a tureen of turtle or a dish of frogs without offering some to his neighbours, but he was incapable of making a great sacrifice for the good of others:—he was generous, but not self denying—a good-natured indulgence to himself and all his friends was his principal characteristic.

Succeeding days passed away as those which

had preceeded them; and the young people walked, talked, rode, and sang together.

Rosalind was engaged in taking a likeness of Maria, and Michael and Edred if possible attended the morning sitting, criticising the work as it progressed, or laughing with the artist and her subject. Rupert would often join the party; but when he did so said little, indeed Edred talked so much that he rarely allowed him the opportunity. Terry Weston might be seen there occasionally, arranging his stock and curls before the large mirror, or peering through his glass at the miniature, and more than hinting a very striking resemblance between himself and his very lovely sister. Richard and the Misses Bailey rarely made their appearance in the studio, as they called it in derision, preferring other localities for their follies and flirtations.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THE day after to-morrow will be Maria's birth-day. Could not we give her a sort of fête —or a serenade—or something? She would be so delighted," said Michael to his sister early one morning.

"Do you intend to do every thing that would delight Maria?" asked Rosalind archly.

"No—not exactly all, Miss Rose, so you need not look so impertinent; but I think her an exceedingly beautiful girl."

"And very sensible, and conversable?" again

questioned Rosalind, anxiety mingling with her archness, for she had no wish that her cousin should be converted into her sister.

"Quite sensible enough; and I do not like talking women."

"Nothing personal I hope, Mike," said his sister with a smile.

"Not even the hint of a fault in you, Rosalind; if that is what you intend. You are most delightful as a sister."

"Which means that you do not think I should prove as delightful for a wife."

"Yes, quite as delightful to such a person as Edred Cottrell, who has wits as quick as your own; but I suspect you would hold the rule over a husband like myself; and I do not fancy a female's ruling a husband, though she has well ruled a state ere now, and will I doubt not again."

"Nor I either; I would rather be ruled than rule; through affection I admit, for I fear I should rebel against harsh, open tyranny. No,

no; if I ever marry it shall be one whom I can reverence as well as love."

"Take care, Rose; girls who profess to be very particular as to worth and talent generally wed fools or knaves, which is a fate I do not desire for my sister, who is a noble, high-minded, fascinating creature; a little too high spirited perhaps, but tamed by a look or word of affection. There now, that is a very pretty speech for a brother, and deserves a kiss."

"A dozen I should think," said Rosalind laughing, "fraternal flattery being so rare."

"Now for this serenade, or whatever it is to be."

"Ah, Mike! I hope that eulogium was not intended as a bribe," said Rosalind with a playful shake of the head. "But I will not search too deeply into this matter:—

'Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise.'

How can we give a fête being only visitors? And how would Mrs. Denham like being dis-

turbed by a serenade, to say nothing of her dislike to having the doors and windows open after nine o'clock? We must have matins instead of vespers, and not too early either, or the sluggish lie-a-beds will vote us bores. Let our joyous strain greet her on her first waking."

"Ah, yes! that will be better. What shall we sing?"

"You must compose something original of course."

"Now, Rosalind, you know I am no ballad monger; and never made four lines of poetry in my life."

"But inspired by such beauty;"—said his sister a little mischievously.

"Even her beauty will never transform me into a poet," replied Michael looking blank.

"And yet you would play the minstrel."

"Could not you write a song, Rosalind?"

"I write a song!—

" I had rather be a kitten, and cry mew!—
Than one of these same metre-ballad-mongers."

" Then we must swear in Cottrell as one of our privy council; nothing can be done without him, I know you think. What will young Lennard say to this?" observed her brother, trying to look as arch and mischievous as she had looked before; but not succeeding well, his features having little of that mobility of expression which was one of her greatest charms.

" Mr. Lennard may say what he pleases—I care not," replied Rosalind coldly.

" But Edred does not sing; and three voices would sound better in a chorus," observed Michael thoughtfully.

" No; he has no voice—more is the pity!—but he can beat the drum, or the tambourine, or some such thing."

" The drum, or the tambourine, Rosalind!—I am not going to have the thing turned into a burlesque. Mrs. Denham's birthday is in the

winter, or we might make her the subject of our minstrelsy."

"You might if you would; but I should not join your band."

"Why not, Rose? Don't you think she would be pleased."

"Most probably; and thence my reason for declining. She suspected me of legacy hunting before I had been an hour beneath her roof—she shall learn to know me better."

"Psha! Rosalind, that is one of your romantic, high flown notions. I wondered why you were so barely polite, never seeking to please her as you do most other elderly ladies, indeed never voluntarily addressing her."

"You know the reason now then."

"I know, but I do not approve. Would you have me pursue the same course?"

"She has shown no suspicion of you, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see you her favorite."

"I believe you, my high-minded, generous

sister; and that without any idea of sharing in my good fortune. If you had to name her heir you would name any one but yourself. Alas! I am more selfish—know more of the value of money, and hope to grow in her esteem, flattering myself that I have won some favor in her eyes already. But the song—who is to write it? and where are we to find another singer?"

"Will you allow me to join your band?" said Wyvill advancing from a distant window, where he had been sitting so quiet and silent that both brother and sister had forgotten his presence.

"Can you sing?" asked Rosalind in surprise.

"You never give me credit for doing any thing, Miss Trevor," replied Rupert evidently piqued.

"I beg your pardon," said Rosalind colouring. "Remember I never heard you sing."

"Remember you never asked me, and my

late illness has left me little inclination for exertion; but, *faute de mieux,* perhaps my voice may assist you."

"Oh, thank you! we will not be critical. This is very good-natured," observed Michael, never considering that his acceptance of the offer was not conveyed in flattering terms.

"Perhaps you will write the song too," said Rosalind a little mischievously.

"*Faute de mieux,* I will attempt it."

"Will you indeed? Well you are a capital fellow! A friend in need is a friend indeed! I never dreamt of your being a poet—did you Rosalind?"

> "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

answered his sister gaily, or as her new ally considered, mockingly.

"Poet is too high sounding a name; I may string some lines together with Miss Trevor's assistance, which may serve your purpose;—that is all to which I pretend."

"I can give you little assistance, being too merry to be poetical."

"Then you think to be poetical you must be melancholy."

"Perhaps not exactly melancholy; but thoughtful—lofty—dreamy:—I do not know how to explain it precisely."

"Never mind telling Wyvill what you think of him now, but set about the words and the tune," interposed Michael impatiently.

"Pray do not stop Miss Trevor's description; I should like to know what she thinks of me."

"You are a bold person" said Rosalind blushing, yet smiling too. "There are few whom I should venture to ask for my character *viva voce*."

"You mean to intimate that I should hear nothing pleasing."

"It is a breach of privilege to ask a woman for her meaning—she means anything—or nothing—just as she chooses. Only this I say,

you shall not be my interpreter when I talk with the Chickasaws, since you do not confine yourself to explaining what is said, but guess at what is not said. I was describing a poet in a woman's indescribable sort of a way, and you take the description to yourself; I thought you only proposed writing verses *faute de mieux.*"

"Exactly so;—my—'eyes are not in a fine frenzy rolling.'—If you desire sublime poetry you had better employ Cottrell."

"Oh, no! that would never do: he is clever, but not sentimental enough."

"Do you think me sentimental?"

"Oh, no!"

"And yet your words conveyed this idea."

"Then it was a very original idea; and original ideas are so scarce in these degenerate days that I deserve a bay wreath at the least."

"It is impossible to comprehend you, Miss Trevor."

"Do not waste time in attempting it, Mr.

Wyvill; I cannot comprehend myself, so insist on your thinking me sublime, being incomprehensible."

"You sublime, Rosalind, with those merry, laughing eyes dancing in light, and glistening like diamonds; and that mischievous smile! Wyvill has much more of the sublime about him—he is stately and picturesque."

"Stately and picturesque!—what an admirable description!" exclaimed Rosalind, shaking back her long glossy curls and looking up at Rupert with eyes that as her brother said glistened like diamonds.

Her attitude was strikingly graceful; the head thrown a little back showed to greater advantage her swan-like throat, whose snowy whiteness was strongly contrasted by the raven curls that clustered round, whilst the merry mischief lurking in her large dark eyes gave a spell-like power to her beauty. There was no smile of conscious power on Rupert Wyvill's

lip;—his cheek was flushed, and his admiring gaze fixed on the beautiful being before him.

"Thank goodness I am your brother, Rosa! I would not undertake an encounter of wits with you to obtain my captaincy."

"Then you admit that my wit, as you term it, is never pointed at you, dear Michael."

"Readily; and I suspect Wyvill is wishing that you were his sister to secure the same exemption."

"Is he?" asked Rosalind looking down with a deepening blush.

"To be sure he is; but I thought you had promised to be friends for the future."

"Our truce was only for three days: and as he never sought its extension, we are at war again."

"Then I pity him."

"Keep your pity for those who need and deserve it, Michael. Methinks you might say prettier things of your only sister;—but when was woman's affection ever returned as it

merited? It is getting on, and none of our do-re-mi arranged."

"But here comes Cottrell, so we will set to work directly, for there is no time to lose," answered her brother.

"Since Edred cannot squall in unison with us, he shall bear a gorgeous nosegay on a long pole to present to Maria, as our arms could not reach her casement, and to let down a string, or pull it up with the tongs, would be rather nonsentimental," added his sister.

"Now mind, Rosa, I am not going to have it made ridiculous," observed Michael a little anxiously.

"Bless the man! he is afraid of being laughed at. The 230th are never laughed at—it would not do for one of ours,"—said Rosalind, trying to look and speak like her brother.

"Rose, Rose, I am half afraid of you."

"Afraid!—I thought the 230th were never afraid."

"This is too bad," said her brother colouring.

"Don't be vexed, dear Mike," said his sister, laying her hand on his shoulder and looking coaxingly into his face. "Not here—no one shall laugh at you here through my folly; and no one shall laugh at you any where else, but me;—and you don't mind my laughing at you—do you?"

The silver tones so soft, so rich—the affectionate look were irresistible.

"You are a tormenting, bewitching gipsy, there is no withstanding you," cried her brother, catching her in his arms, and giving her a hearty kiss.

"Fie! fie! Mike and before company! I am quite ashamed," said Rosalind releasing herself with a crimson cheek, half laughing and half frowning.

"Are we to play follow the leader?" asked Edred springing in at the window. "I am a relative too."

Rosalind stepped back with a mien so proud and commanding that it was difficult to re-

cognise the playful girl of the moment before.

"I beg your pardon," said Edred, involuntarily awed by her sudden dignity.

Her answering bow was the bow of an empress; and it was some moments ere the crimson spot of resentment passed from her cheek.

At first Edred entered with spirit into the project, but when its details came to be more fully discussed he seemed more inclined to oppose all that Wyvill suggested, than to propose or carry anything into effect himself; and so apparent did this at last become, though his perverseness was clothed in a merry guise, that even Michael perceived it, setting it down to jealously of Rupert's singing, and Rosalind was obliged to use a decided tone to keep him from utterly spoiling the scheme by his folly and obstinacy.

He did not like this tune and he did not like

that, though as he could not sing it was a subject on which he should not have interfered. One tune was too merry—another too sentimental—a third like the dead march in Saul. Then he was sure he should not like Wyvill's words—they would be too solemn for the occasion;—they had better sing—"Wake Maid of Lorn!" or something else that they knew. Rupert said little; but Michael began to grow hot and impatient, yet even this had no effect, till Rosalind, openly expressing her displeasure, threatened to have nothing to do with him, when he suddenly grew more docile, promising to perform whatever part should be assigned him to the best of his abilities, proposing as Rosalind would not believe that he knew D from E—to ride over to C. to procure blue ribbons for the guitar and nosegay, a proposition readily agreed to.

On further consultation Wyvill showed such a complete knowledge of music, with such a

correct taste and poetical imagination that Rosalind was led to repeat her wonder at finding talents which she had not suspected.

"As I said before, Miss Trevor, you never think I can do any thing."

"From this moment, I will think you can do every thing," said Rosalind in a tone that banished all feeling of pique, and amply repaid him for any former vexation.

Edred returned in a more amiable temper; and the secret preparations for the good-natured plot went merrily on.

The morning dawned as a birth-day morning should dawn, clear, bright, and refreshing. The dew was still hanging like diamond drops on the shrubs and flowers when Rosalind proceeded towards the garden, accompanied by her three coadjutors, to make up the nosegay. All were in spirits; Edred more gay than any, and a splendid bouquet was soon collected, and gracefully arranged. Michael looked a little anxiously at Edred, fearing a return of his

former bantering, and non-complying mood, or at least an endeavour to throw ridicule on the scheme and its promoters, from the love of mischief, if not of contradiction; but as his only pranks were attempts to insinuate a piece of rue and a nettle into the nosegay, which were immediately detected and expelled he became gradually reassured; and pleased himself by anticipating triumphant success. The first part of their task was completed; and the singers, preceded by Edred bearing the nosegay, took their station beneath the window of her whom they had assembled to honor just as the clock told eight.

As Rosalind struck a few chords on the guitar, more than one night-cap appeared at the row of casements above to the great amusement of the young men below, and the confusion of the wearers, who had no suspicion of who the minstrels were; but when Maria, having arranged her hair and dressing gown becomingly, a second time appeared at her

window, the song was commenced by Rosalind, then taken up by Rupert and Michael, each singing in turn, and all joining in the chorus save Edred:—

The joyous morn is waking now
With blush of rosy dye;
The mist still veils the mountain's brow,
The lark is in the sky;
And gemm'd with dew like diamond spray
Hang leafy bough and flow'r;
Unheard as yet the rush of day—
So soft—so still the hour!

CHORUS.

Come forth! Come forth! Come forth!
Trip o'er the dewy green—
Come forth! Come forth! Come forth!
And be our maiden queen.

The summer sun is thron'd on high
Amid his realm of cloud;
Sweeps by the breeze like maiden's sigh,
As sweet, and scarce more loud;
The gladsome earth looks fresh and fair,
Murmurs the busy throng;—
Rich odours float through all the air—
The woods are fill'd with song.

CHORUS.

Come forth! Come forth! Come forth!
Trip o'er the sunny green;
Come forth! Come forth! Come forth!
And be our Mayday queen.

The gentle moon is beaming bright
From out her starry hall;
And floods of soft and silv'ry light
Across the greensward fall.
The hush'd wave sleeps beneath her ray,
The fire flies glance and gleam:
Through woven boughs the moonbeams play
On glade and rippling stream.

CHORUS.

Come forth! Come forth! Come forth!
Trip o'er the moon-lit green:
Come forth! Come forth! Come forth!
And be our fairy queen.

Before the conclusion of the strain many listeners were looking from the casements above, whilst Mrs. Denham was standing at the window of her study below, she being always an early riser. As for good-natured Mrs. Bailey she quite forgot her night-cap, and stood leaning out to catch the words more

distinctly with the neatly plaited frill setting close round her face; whilst Mr. Adnam in his shirt sleeves hurrahed, and encored between every verse.

The flattering strain had concluded—the beauty had graciously accepted the bouquet and the homage, rendering her thanks in words to all, but in looks to Michael alone; and the company were complimenting the minstrels, and not without reason, when three fantastically dressed little sweeps, preceded by one of a larger size, and bearing a long pole decorated at the top with a bunch of carrots, turnips, and onions, burst forth from among the shrubs, and began dancing and shuffling on the terrace with all their might to the discordant music of their own brushes and dust pans, aided by a penny trumpet blown by the pole bearer.

Minstrels, listeners, and flattered beauty, all turned their eyes in wonder on the new comers; and then shouts of laughter burst

from the gazers, so thoroughly ludicrous were the dress and movements of the sweeps.

Even Rosalind's soft, yet joyous laugh might be distinguished amid the merry chorus, for though a little annoyed at the burlesque, she could not maintain her gravity; and Rupert, after one flashing glance at Edred that told his suspicion, watched with a quiet mirth the antics of the sweeps as they capered, and shuffled, and clashed their dust pans, grinning to show their white teeth; then pausing a moment to gather breath, broke forth into the following parody:—Michael Trevor alone laughed not.

The chimney tops are peering red
From out the murky fog;
Unheard as yet the milkman's tread—
Sad howls the watchful dog;
And sulky maid with frowning brow
Wakes at the sweeper's call;
Muttering in tones nor soft, nor low,
Why doth the fellow bawl?

CHORUS.

Come forth! Come forth! Come forth!
And take thy walk below;
Come forth! Come forth! Come forth!
And cry—Soot ho! Soot ho!

"Capital! capital! encore! encore!" shouted Richard Weston, who was delighted at the exhibition. "Go it my fine fellows! Let us have that shuffle over again. The other company has not a chance with you."

Encouraged by this commendation and the laughter occasioned by their gambols, particularly in the Misses Bailey, who were glad of the ridicule thrown on the homage paid to Maria, the sweeps set to again with redoubled vigour; and again were some of the party convulsed with merriment. Even Mrs. Sewell, though annoyed at the burlesque on account of the Trevors, could not continue grave; and poor Mr. Adnam from his fear of vexing his favorites Rupert and Rosalind, exhibited a ludicrous struggle between glee and gravity.

"Get away you young rascals! What do you mean by shuffling there? Shuffle off directly!" cried Michael Trevor, provoked beyond endurance.

"Oh! let them shuffle Mike; they perform nearly as well as we did," said his laughing sister.

"I am ashamed of you, Rosalind. This is too bad! Because it is Cottrell's trick, you applaud it, and care nothing for the ridicule attached to your brother. Remember, Miss Trevor, you share in that ridicule."

"I will bear it all, dear Mike, if that will satisfy you. Don't be vexed at my laughing," she added affectionately. "I really cannot help it, their dancing and costumes are so irresistibly droll, and I know nothing of the planner of the travestie I assure you."

"You can guess though. And you, Wyvill, take it as coolly as Rosalind—I cannot think what you are made of."

"Of less combustible materials than a squib, to be fired by boyish impertinence."

"Less combustible materials indeed! As Mr. Adnam says, there is no rousing you. Not even boyish impertinence will do that," exclaimed Michael, unappeased by his answer, and glancing angrily at Edred. "But those fellows shall not stay there! grinning to please their employer and Mr. Richard Weston. Be off, you young scamps! Make yourselves scarce, if you do not desire a good beating."

"Let them finish their dance, Trevor: they are promising pupils and deserve reward. You must pay them handsomely, Cottrell," said Wyvill, looking at Edred, who deigned no reply but returned gaze for gaze.

"Not I indeed; they shall not stay here. Be off! we have had more than enough of this mummery," cried Michael Trevor with increasing passion, as the laughter and plaudits of Richard Weston grew louder and louder causing the sweeps to shuffle more furiously. "You

won't be off—won't you? We will soon see that," he added snatching the pole from Edred, and rushing towards the dancers with a menacing gesture.

There was no mistaking his purpose, for there was wrath in the gleaming of his pale blue eye.

Away scampered the sweeps in all directions, tumbling over and into the flower beds; and away scampered Michael in pursuit to the great amusement of the spectators.

"Holla! you young monkeys, do not tread down Mrs. Denham's flowers," shouted Edred —the only words he had spoken since the appearance of the sweeps.

The pursued and the pursuer were soon lost to view among the shrubs; but the latter returned in a few minutes, the chase having been terminated by his catching the smallest *sootie*, and ascertaining from him, what he had before suspected, that the band had been hired by Edred Cottrell.

"What have you done with the rival showmen? I hope you have not demolished them," cried Richard Weston, when Michael re-appeared panting and flushed.

"I have not harmed a hair of their heads—it is from their employer that I look for satisfaction," replied Michael fiercely, fronting Edred.

"It was only a jest—a merry jest," said Rosalind soothingly, placing her hand on her brother's arm, whilst she cast a deprecating glance on Cottrell, and a pleading, but more timid one on Rupert.

Her laughter had been hushed from the moment that Michael had rushed forward to disperse the sweeps; till then she had hoped that, by taking it calmly like Rupert, he would rob the mischief of its sting; but that act, by proving him vulnerable to ridicule, fixed ridicule upon him, whilst the fierceness of his anger alarmed her. Generally good-tempered, she had never seen him in a rage before.

"It is no jest, Rosalind, though you would fain persuade me so to shield a favorite. It is an insult; and shall be apologised for—or avenged," answered Michael, the crimson blood rushing up to the roots of his hair.

"It is too silly a trifle to be thought of, Trevor. Merely a merry farce after a beautiful opera; for I flatter myself our singing was much admired," interposed Rupert Wyvill, hoping to calm him by making light of the matter.

"It may turn out a tragedy instead of a farce," answered Michael moodily, paying little heed to his sister's soothing remarks. "I count it an insult, and warn Mr. Cottrell that I shall not let it pass as a jest."

"Pooh! pooh! Trevor, a little merry mischief—think nothing of it. Wyvill cares no more for such folly than a stately swan for the spray from an oar. A shake flings it off, and it leaves no trace," said Mr. Adnam, good-

naturedly, anxious to promote peace, especially for Rosalind's sake whose cheek was blanched by fear.

"Wyvill may do as he pleases; I am formed of other materials, and Mr. Cottrell having heard my opinion of his conduct can pursue what course he pleases."

"You did not mean this; you did not intend it as an insult," said Rosalind in a low but firm voice, looking steadily at her cousin.

Her tone struck Rupert as singular; it was not pleading—it was not coaxing—neither was it commanding; but it conveyed the idea that the speaker was merely naming a fact, or recalling one already known to remembrance; and Edred too seemed struck with that tone to judge from an almost imperceptible start. He appeared to struggle for some moments against vindictive feelings awakened by Michael's words; then his look cleared—the frown that had contracted his brow passed away; and

he answered with a pleasing frankness, though making no attempt to conceal his vexation.

"I might ask, Trevor, on what grounds you charged me," he began.

"On the confession of one of your own hired mummers," said Michael interrupting him.

"Wrung from him by the dread of a drubbing, I suppose; and therefore no trustworthy evidence I might argue if inclined to put you on full proof of my delinquency; but I am not so inclined. You used rather high words just now, which caused me to remain silent longer than I should otherwise have done, for, like you, I am made of other materials than Wyvill, and try as I may shall never be cold and calculating. Your manner provoked me, but Rosalind's pleading looks and pallid cheeks have restored me to a saner mood. Chancing to encounter the sweeps on my way to C. just after we had been discussing our birth-day pageant, I was led by that will o' the wisp mischief

finding them merry, clever fellows, to engage them to close our performance with a laughable entertainment. Had I anticipated your anger I would not have done it. It was fun—not insult; and I am ready to pay the penalty in the way of confession or apology. I thought to win a laugh from you as well as others, and am very sorry for the turn, which the affair has taken. I offer no further defence for my folly, but leave my case as it is in your hands. Can I say more, Trevor? Am I forgiven?"

"To be sure, Cottrell," said Michael, holding out his hand, appeased at once by his frank confession. "I am sorry I used such high words, but I was vexed at being made ridiculous; the fault was partly mine for not being better tempered, so we will say no more about it."

"No, no, Trevor; the fault was mine alone. I hope to learn wisdom in time; as it is, I am always annoying my best friends by my boyish folly, never thinking of anything but

present amusement, you are a good fellow to accept my apology so readily. And you too, Rosalind, will you forgive me?"

"I have no right to feel offended since I laughed as much as any one at first," answered his cousin carelessly.

"And you, Wyvill—will you pardon me for having rendered you ridiculous?"

"You never rendered me ridiculous; you failed in that," replied Wyvill with quiet dignity.

"Thank! thanks! you are all very kind and forgiving; and I must be a better boy for the future."

"You ought to apologise to Miss Weston," said Mr. Adnam.

"Nonsense about apologies, it was capital fun," cried Richard. "And if there is not Mrs. Bailey in her night-cap! I wish I could draw caricatures," he added, bursting into fresh fits of laughter.

"I never thought of my cap," said poor

Mrs. Bailey, drawing in her head in some confusion.

"My foolery has given more eclat to your birth-day, Maria, so I shall count on your favor," said Edred, bowing to the gratified beauty ere he quitted the terrace with the other performers.

Had Mrs. Denham seen and heard from her study window all that had passed? And if so, what had she thought thereon? That she had seen and heard all was certain—what she had thought thereon was uncertain. When Rosalind glanced towards her the features wore their wonted calm and almost stolid expression.

It was a merrier breakfast than usual, for Michael's good humour was so completely restored that none checked their comments on the song and succeeding dance for fear of paining him. He even laughed at his own anger, and admitted that the sweeps were inimitable shufflers; whilst Edred's conduct was admirable—just what it should have been;

a subdued gaiety with marked attentions to Rosalind and her brother, and admissions of his own folly, with endeavours to turn the conversation to other subjects, till, finding that Trevor no longer shrank from the discussion, he entertained the party with a most amusing account of his engaging and drilling the sweeps; and the difficulty of equipping and perfecting them in so short a time. It was impossible not to be diverted by his humorous description; and the breakfast room rang with as merry laughter as had greeted the exploits of the sweeps themselves.

"Your pretty surprise went off beautifully this morning," said Mrs. Sewell, entering the little room appropriated to drawing, as Rosalind was putting away her brushes preparatory to following the other young people, who were gone to get ready for a walk.

"The sweeps dance and all?" asked Rosalind archly.

"That was a very stupid trick of Edred's,

and he should have shown more consideration for your feelings."

"My feelings, Minny! What feelings?"

"Oh! I can see, Rose, though you never think that I see any thing," replied the old lady nodding significantly. "I should not have thought that he would have tried to make any thing ridiculous in which you were engaged."

"Should not you," said Rosalind in a tone that puzzled her hearer.

"No, I should not; but perhaps he never thought of vexing you and Michael, only Rupert Wyvill, for they do not seem very good friends sometimes."

"You do see a great deal indeed."

"To be sure I do, Rosalind, though I am not sure that you think so now. You look and speak so oddly sometimes that I don't know whether you are in jest or earnest."

"Heigh ho! nor I either; so you know as much as I do."

"You are a very strange girl, Rosalind."

"Am I? then you do see extraordinary things indeed. Marvellous things!" said Rosalind looking up with a mischievous expression. "Don't you like odd girls?"

"You know that I like you, and presume on the knowledge."

"Oh! fie, Mrs. Sewell; to think of accusing your old pet of presumption," said Rosalind, holding up her finger in rebuke. "I will run away—I won't stay to be scolded."

"Stop a minute," cried Mrs. Sewell catching her by the sleeve, "I want to talk to you of the song. Mrs. Throgmorton, who, you know, is a very fine musician and constantly at the opera, was delighted; and says it was quite a treat; your voices harmonised so beautifully, and the tune was so admirably adapted to the words. Her praise is something I can tell you; and she talks of having you at her concerts in town."

"I am obliged to her, but I am not going to

town; and certainly not going to sing in public at a private concert. Besides, all the praise is due to Mr. Wyvill, who wrote the words and adapted them to an old tune picked up somewhere abroad."

"I am sure you helped him, Rose."

"Very, very little."

"Well, I had no idea he could have done such a thing; and in so short a time too;—he seems so studious, and do-nothing like. However your singing was very much admired, particularly by Mrs. Denham."

"Did she make any remarks on it then?"

"To be sure; you never believe that she says anything."

"Not much certainly. But what did she say?"

"Why, when Mrs. Throgmorton remarked what a sweet voice you had, so clear, so rich, and asked Mrs. Denham if she did not think you sang with a great deal of feeling, she answered, 'yes;' and when I remarked how

good-natured it was of you to sing on the birthday of such a vaunted beauty, and that it was a proof of your being free from envy, Mrs. Denham observed that she did not believe you entertained any jealousy of Maria Weston."

"Was that all that Mrs. Denham said?"

"All! was not that enough?"

"To bear me out in the assertion that she says as little as she can help."

"You are never satisfied with anything I tell you," observed the old lady discontentedly.

"Do not be vexed, Minny; but according to you, Mrs. Denham thinks Michael and myself perfection—some rare species of animal never before discovered; yet you can bring no proof of this from her words; and I see no proof in her acts."

"Proofs, Rosalind! you are always wanting proofs just like a man, or a prying lawyer, asking—where did you hear it? and when did you hear it? and from whom did you hear it? You should not be so particular—it does not

become young girls. You will never get married if you want proofs of every thing; but there, it is of no use talking to you about marrying, I see," she added pettishly, as Rosalind laughed outright. "I tell you Mrs. Denham was very much pleased with the song and the singers."

"But how do you know this, Minny dear, if she did not say so?"

"There you are wanting proofs again, just as I said; I won't tell you any thing more."

"A very prudent resolution because then I cannot ask troublesome questions. But was not she more pleased with the dancers? To my mind the sweeps were the best performers, and excited the greatest sensation."

"Nonsense, Rosalind; it was very tiresome, and ill-judged of Edred Cottrell. It is a singular coincidence, but I remember once when I was young, and Mr. Sewell came to serenade me beneath my window, just as he got to the most pathetic part of the song—something

about Delia, I forget what exactly, but it was out of Elegant Extracts—the cats set up such a squalling that he could not hear whether he sang out of tune or not; and I could not distinguish a word. It was very provoking; and my father, who was a hale, merry man of his years, called it a catastrophe ever after. I never understood exactly why; but I believe it was Greek or Hebrew, and that accounts for it. And what was a still more singular coincidence Mrs. Denham, who was quite a girl then, was staying in the house at the time; indeed she generally spent seven months out of the twelve with us, my father being her guardian. But what are you laughing at, Rosalind? Do you suppose that no one ever had their praises sung but Maria Weston? I was young then; and I may say it without vanity now—pretty."

"I am sure you must have been, dear Minny; but don't be vexed—you know I laugh at every thing, and nothing," said Rosalind unwilling to annoy her old friend by admitting

that she was laughing at the singular coincidences, "Did you remind Mrs. Denham of the catastrophe?"

"Yes, and she agreed with me that it was a very singular coincidence; but it is of no use to talk of coincidences to you, for you never understand them."

"No; matrimony and coincidences are above my comprehension."

"There are some things that you won't comprehend, or I am sure you could. Now you won't understand the advantage, nay, even necessity of being more attentive to Mrs. Denham."

"Oh! is that it? the old story:—I thought you were coming to something in a round about way, from your being so fussy, touching my wish for proofs. If she is so very much pleased with me as you assert without my being attentive, attention would be thrown away."

"I did not say that she was so much pleased with you, Rosalind."

"Oh, fie, naughty Minny! you did say so, only you are vexed with me now, and therefore deny it. You know that is the truth."

"I do not know any such thing, Rosalind. She said the other day that you were very high spirited; but I do not pretend to know whether she meant that for praise or blame."

"Did she say that? then I will thread her needle, scold her bailiff, and nurse her old spaniel for the next week at least. I feared that she thought me mean-spirited."

"There is no telling what to be at with you, Rosalind, you seem now so delighted for nothing; but I do hope you will be more civil to her than you have been for Michael's sake, who I think stands a very good chance of being her heir; for I heard her tell Mrs. Throgmorton, without my asking her mind, that he was very handsome, and had very gentlemanly manners."

"I am very glad to hear it;—Mrs. Denham always seems to use the word very when speaking of us, which is very complimentary."

"Then you will not mar his prospects by rudeness or caprice?"

"Rudeness or caprice, Mrs. Sewell! I scorn your words," cried the laughing Rosalind, assuming an offended air. "When was I ever rude or capricious?"

"Well, well, dear; I did not mean that exactly, only it is a singular coincidence.—"

"Oh! good bye if you return to the coincidences. You know I never understand them," cried Rosalind, extricating her sleeve from her friend's detaining fingers and gallopading to the door, flinging back a kiss of the hand just before she closed it behind her.

"It is of no use for me to make out a liking on Mrs. Denham's part, for she will not be attentive to her all I can do. She is so wild—but then she is so merry, and grateful, and affectionate that one cannot help loving her better than any one beside," thought Mrs. Sewell, looking after her favorite. "And there are others love her too. I suppose she will have

Edred Cottrell one of these days, after she has led him a dance; at least he would have it thought so. Yet it will be nothing of a match for her, unless he should get Denham; and then Michael could not have it. Well I don't know how it is to be—and there is no managing Rosalind, or my old friend, so they must both have their own way I conclude. It is a singular coincidence, that I never yet tried to guide any one as I wished, but what they went the contrary way directly."

CHAPTER IX

HASTILY arranging bonnet and scarf, Rosalind descended to the hall, expecting to find her brother and Maria waiting for her to proceed on a walk, but the hall was empty; and voices sounding from the vestibule leading into the drawing-room, she turned towards it just in time to hear Edred say—

"Oh! I dare not do it."

"Then I will. So here goes! I am not afraid of any body, or any thing," rejoined

Miss Bailey, taking a laurel wreath from the table.

Rosalind did not understand to what these words alluded, but mechanically followed the party, consisting of Edred, the Misses Bailey, and some others into the drawing-room, where nearly all the rest of the visitors as well as Mrs. Denham were assembled. Rupert Wyvill was seated at a distant table engaged in writing, and towards him Miss Bailey directed her steps, treading on tip toe, so that he remained unconscious of her approach till she placed the laurel wreath on his head, saying as she did so, in a mock pompous tone—

"I am deputed by this honourable company who were so much charmed by your morning's effusion, to crown you Poet Laureate."

"The company have chosen a worthy deputy, Miss Bailey," he observed after a minute's pause from surprise, and a hurried glance round the circle, his eyes fixing for an instant, as in the morning, on Edred, whose brow became

slightly contracted as their gaze encountered, "but my modesty will not permit me to retain an honor so far above my merit. Bear it back to Mr. Cottrell—to him I yield the crown as due to the author of the sweep's ode."

There was a quiet dignity in his manner that checked even Miss Bailey's impertinent tittering; and a something so commanding that involuntarily she was on the point of obeying his injunction, when Mr. Adnam took the wreath from her hand.

"No, no, Wyvill; you have fairly won it; but it must be given by the hands of beauty. Miss Weston and Miss Trevor I call on you to crown your minstrel."

"I can no longer refuse so high an honor, though quite unworthy to receive it," exclaimed Rupert with amination, playfully bending his knee before Maria and Rosalind as they placed the crown on his head.

"You must make a speech on giving it, ladies," said Mr. Adnam, rubbing his hands

with glee, according to his wont when pleased.

"What must I say?" asked Maria.

"You must be inspired to say something fitting the occasion," replied Mr. Adnam.

"Do you speak, Rosalind; I never can say any thing," whispered Maria.

"Come, come—the speech," cried Mr. Adnam impatiently.

"Oh, yes! the beauties should make a speech," exclaimed Miss Bailey spitefully.

"Do speak for me, Rosalind," again whispered the silent Maria, stepping back.

There was a moment's pause—and then Rosalind spoke with a flushed cheek and glancing eye.

> "The poet's mastery we own,
> And round thy brow we bind this crown.
> May visions bright thy slumbers bless!
> Earth be to thee all loveliness!
> And every leaf a spell to scare,
> Far from thy onward path each care."

"Very good! very good!" cried Mr. Adnam who had a taste for doggrel. "Now Wyvill,

be on your metal, man. Give a speech in return," he added as the blushing Rosalind drew back with eyes bent on the ground not venturing to meet the gaze of the kneeling Rupert. "We are waiting."

They did not wait long; and his flashing eye and impassioned tone gave him the semblance of poetical inspiration.

> "Speech hath no words my thanks to pay—
> Hope at thy bidding lights my way.
> This brow no more shall ache with care—
> Lo! at thy voice flies doubt—despair.
> Earth wears for me a second spring,
> And mounts my soul on joyous wing."

"Very good! very good indeed! You are both capital hands at improvising," cried Mr. Adnam rubbing his hands more fiercely than ever, as Rupert concluded. "There, now, Miss Trevor, to finish it in proper style you must hold out your hand to raise him, which he must kiss with knightly devotion, swearing to keep the wreath till his dying day."

With mingled smiles and blushes, Rosalind

permitted Rupert to take her hand; and those blushes grew none the paler as she caught the few low, earnest words that none beside could hear.

"That is right, Wyvill: that is something like. You are up to the thing. Why are you not always thus alive?" exclaimed Mr. Adnam, "You could not have done it better if you had been practising."

"Perhaps they have," observed Miss Bailey with an ill natured titter.

"How could that be when you gave the wreath, though little expecting how it would be received, as I guess," replied Mr. Adnam rebukingly, seeing that Rosalind was annoyed at the sneer.

"No, I did not expect Rosalind to speak; I thought the beauty of the day was to make the harangue; and so it should have been to my mind," retorted Miss Bailey colouring with vexation.

"I begged Rosalind to speak for me," said

Maria, who was really good-natured, despite all her mother's petting, when no rivalship ruffled her mood, and Rosalind's ready admission of her superiority in beauty and voice had banished every feeling of jealousy. "I am sure I could not have said anything half as pretty."

"Are we to set off on our walk to-day?" asked Edred Cottrell.

"To be sure, Mr. Cottrell; but have a little patience; you are always fidgeting if you do not make the fun yourself," replied Mr. Adnam. "Come along, Wyvill; you are bound in gallantry to attend the lady of the wreath. And do not go to sleep again, now that you have been once roused."

"I am too happy waking ever willingly to slumber again; and am proud indeed to be Miss Trevor's escort. Let me place my wreath in safety, and then I shall be ready."

Rupert might be ready, but the fates were against his being Rosalind's cavalier. As the party were crossing the hall a letter was put

into his hand by his servant, with the intimation that the bearer waited for an answer.

Glancing hastily at the superscription, not as some imagined without a change of colour, he announced the necessity of his remaining to send back a reply, requesting that the walk might not be delayed on his account.

"You can follow us," said Michael, offering his arm to Maria.

> "*Oh!* when a lady's in the case
> All other things of course give place."

observed Edred gaily, but not so loud as to reach Rupert's ears.

"Who told you that there was a lady in the case," asked Mr. Adnam rather sharply.

"It was a lady's hand all the world over; there is no mistaking their ups, and downs, and alongs."

"You must have very quick eyes to have seen the ups, and downs, and alongs; besides, I do not agree with you: I have seen some men write just like women."

"Have you?—Mollys--women's men I suppose; and I am sure Wyvill would never correspond with such. But think it a male correspondent if you please, I never purposely make mischief, though I may do so sometimes inadvertently."

"You forget the sweeps this morning," observed Mr. Adnam in a vexed tone.

"Pooh! I only meant that for fun, not mischief, and you should not remind a man of his troubles, particularly when Rosalind and her party forgave me so generously. You are out of humour about something, Mr. Adnam. What is the matter?"

"No such thing; I am not out of humour," replied Mr. Adnam pettishly. "Miss Trevor will you accept of me as Wyvill's substitute till his arrival? I am sure he will follow directly."

"Allow me to offer another arm," said Edred. "I must not say as they do on the turnpike boards, two donkies make one horse, or Mr.

Adnam might be offended; but perhaps you will consider us two for a time equivalent to Petrarch crowned by your hands."

"You may call yourself a donkey if you please; I shall not quarrel with you for that; but ten such as us two would not be equivalent to Wyvill when in health," muttered Mr. Adnam still more petulantly.

"I beg your pardon, sir; I had not the slightest intention of affronting you," said Edred good-humouredly.

"You need not beg my pardon—I am not affronted—I am not at all vexed—I never care for nonsense," replied Mr. Adnam, looking exceedingly cross all the time.

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Edred politely, whilst Rosalind changed the conversation by praising some flowers in a bed to the right.

Mr. Adnam soon recovered his usual good-humour, and Edred made himself particularly agreeable. Maria was very gracious towards

Michael, whilst the Misses Bailey and Miss Highworth smiled on their respective beaux, the two Westons, and a friend of Richard's, so that the woods were gay with the merry jests and merry laughs of some of the walking party. Miss Highworth's money made her a dangerous rival to Rosalind in Mr. Terry Weston's estimation.

"Cannot we return by some other path? I hate going back the same way I came," observed Miss Bailey, when a high fence barred all further progress forward.

"To be sure, I will be your guide," cried Richard. "It is a wild path, but you will not mind that."

"And a very pretty one," added Edred.

So novelty carried the day, and all submitted to Richard's guidance, Mr. Adnam not choosing to say anything of the difficulty of finding them should Wyvill attempt to follow.

"What a romantic little dell, and picturesque cottage!" said Rosalind, pausing to admire the

view, ere she descended the steep with the rest of the party into the vale below.

"Monstrous cold that cottage in winter! Why there is a crack as broad as my hand down the side. I should not like to pass the honeymoon there—should you?" questioned Richard appealing to Miss Bailey.

"No—to be sure not; I should prefer Brighton; but cracks in the wall keep the poor people healthy, letting in air—their rooms are generally so hot and stivy that there is no breathing in them."

"There is little over heat in them in winter; I wonder how the poor live through a hard season," remarked Rosalind feelingly.

"Oh, pooh! they are well enough off; I have no idea of setting people above themselves with societies for this, and societies for that. Day labourers will be wanting drawing rooms like ours very soon, with stoves and cigars," observed Richard Weston.

"They may want them long enough. Their

scanty wages will scarcely furnish the coarsest food, so you may still hope to keep all the cigars to yourself."

"I do not know that, Rosalind; for I saw a butcher's boy smoking one the other day."

"The only persons who should do so in my opinion."

"Oh, pooh! I remember you play fine, and profess to dislike cigars. I tell you what, my wife must have no such fancies."

"Thank you for the warning," said Rosalind laughing. "I must no longer aspire to the honor of your hand."

"You had better not, for I would rather go without a wife than a cigar. But look! look, there is fun! the child's pitcher has fallen into the stream, and she can't get it out."

"Poor little thing!" said Rosalind. "Let us go and help her."

"No need for that, there is your minstrel, the poet laureate, coming down the dell; he can fish up the pitcher—it will be quite poet-

ical. Let us stand behind these bushes, and see what he will do," he added pulling Rosalind back, till she also was screened behind some hawthorns.

They were not kept long in suspense as to what Rupert would do. He came down the dell with a quick, bounding step, but stopped abruptly as he reached the girl, who was crying bitterly. The distance was too great for the party screened by the bushes to hear what he said, but they saw him cut a hooked stick from a black thorn near—fish up the pitcher—fill it with water; and finding that the child staggered beneath its weight, carry it for her towards the cottage, entering, as it seemed, at her request.

"That is just like Wyvill; he was always a spooney—no dash—no go about him. He should have pitched in the child after the pitcher;—that would have been such fun!" cried Richard.

"I hope you are only in jest," observed Rosalind very gravely.

"Not I indeed, my pretty coz; I am always for fun. Let us go and see what Wyvill is at in the cottage; twirling a distaff I should not wonder."

Away hurried the whole party down the rugged path, Richard leading the van, closely followed by Rosalind. The cottage door was closed, but a little window allowed a view of the interior, and at this window Richard Weston took his station, making a sign for silence to those behind; and at his back stood Rosalind, Edred, and Mr. Adnam, peeping under and over his head as they best could.

It was a small, a very small room, with mud walls—a clay floor; and a large open chimney, with two bricks for dogs. A chair, a stool, and a table, with a broken tea cup or two, a plate, and a kettle, appeared to be all the furniture, save a small bed without curtains in the corner on which lay an aged women with the hue of

death, and a look of squalid, hopeless misery. Her eyes were turned towards the fire with a longing, hungry gaze, though there was nothing there but a few live embers—no food—no hissing kettle.

Rupert was crouching down arranging the wood put on by the child, and trying to fan and blow the embers into a blaze. After some minutes he suceeeded; a flame shot up through the crackling wood; and the old woman chuckled with glee at the sight. Then her harsh tones were heard chiding her grand-daughter for not bringing her food, as if a momentary blaze could be sufficient for the scantiest cooking, and utterly forgetful that there was no food on the fire, scarcely any in the house.

"Stop a minute, granny; and you shall have some," answered the child timidly, frightened at her vehemence.

"Give me anything—give me something to drink. Would you let your granny starve—and you living in plenty?" questioned the old

crone passionately, her hollow voice shocking those who heard her. The poor child, who was in rags and wore a cowed and famished look, tried to pour some water out of the pitcher into the cracked cup; but her hand shook so much that Rupert rose from his crouching position to assist her. The lip of the pitcher was broken, and the young man, unused to such a task, spilled the water over himself and the poor girl too.

"I am less skilful than willing it appears," observed Rupert with a kindly smile, whilst the child looked down in fear as if expecting a scolding, though the awkwardness was none of hers. "Can you give her nothing to eat?—she seems half starved."

"Starving—starving—not tasted a morsel since yesterday; and now they are giving me only water to drink, and keeping the good things for themselves," croaked the old woman angrily.

"Indeed, indeed, there is nothing better," sobbed the poor, timid child, terrified at her grandmother's violence.

"Have you no food?" again asked Rupert.

"We have no money," faltered the little girl.

"Have you nothing at all in the house?"

"Give me something to eat! I am starving," cried the old woman more sharply.

"If you won't tell—"said the little girl creeping close up to Wyvill, and looking half pleadingly, half confidingly into his face—that face so full of kindness and sympathy—then pulling something out from under the bed.

"Potatoes! Where did you get them?" asked Rupert struck by her manner.

"Don't beat me! Pray don't beat me!" cried the trembling girl, clasping her hands, and letting the potatoes fall to the ground. "I could not let granny starve—and I am so hungry myself! I had only a turnip to eat all yesterday."

"Poor child! Poor child!" said Rupert softly, patting her head to reassure her. "You shall have money—you shall have food."

"Food! food!" repeated the old woman sharply—it was the sharpness of gnawing hunger, joined to the growing imbecility of age.

Rupert thrust the potatoes into the fire so hurriedly, and so heedlessly, that he burnt his fingers in the attempt; and the wringing of his hands with the pain appeared so ludicrous in Richard Weston's eyes, that he could no longer restrain his mirth.

Wyvill turned towards the window at the sound of his boisterous laugh, and reddened on finding he had been watched—and by whom.

"You bear a charmed life, encountering perils by water, and perils by fire," exclaimed Richard Weston bursting into the cottage. "What a capital caricature this would make—you crouching down to blow the fire. There might be a series—the fishing up the pitcher

—fanning the wet wood—throwing over the water—and burning your fingers. I wish Cruikshanks had been present."

"What are you fine ladies and gentlemen all come here for? To mock at a starving old woman?" questioned the crone, starting up in her bed, and shaking her shrivelled hand at the unwelcome guests. "You would have hanged my boy, but he is gone out of your way —out of your way!" she added, nodding her palsied head.

"We are come to assist you," said Rosalind soothingly, taking her shrivelled hand in hers. "We will give you food."

"Food! food!" repeated the old woman with a wolfish eagerness in her dimmed eyes. "But I won't tell you where he is," she added, setting her teeth, or rather her toothless gums.

"We do not ask you to tell us any thing," answered Rosalind gently.

"No, no: I won't tell you;—but you said I

should have something to eat, and I am hungry —very hungry. You grand folks don't know what hunger is."

"Is there any house near, where you can buy a loaf or something to eat?" asked Rosalind, addressing the girl, who seemed bewildered by the presence of so many strangers.

"Granny has no money, ma'am," answered the child with a courtesy.

"Here is money," said Rosalind drawing out her purse. "Is there any cottage near?"

"Yes, yes; I can get bread—I am very hungry, and granny too," cried the half famished child with gleaming eyes.

"Poor thing?" said Rosalind, her own eyes filling with tears. "Bring back some bread as fast as you can for your grandmother, and take some yourself."

Snatching the money, the child dashed out of the cottage without staying to offer thanks, to the great amusement of Richard Weston, who declared the whole scene to be very rich.

"How can you take that ugly old woman's hand? I should be afraid of catching a fever," observed Miss Bailey, keeping with her sister outside the door, and using her vinaigrette.

"Yes, indeed; you had better be careful—she looks so wild. We can send the servants to her when we go home," chimed in Maria also keeping aloof.

"The poor woman has no fever—she is only hungry—starving," said Rosalind, keeping her former station.

"Starving! yes starving! That is it!"—repeated the woman, catching at the last word. "You look kind. Will you give me something to eat?" she added looking pleadingly into Rosalind's face.

"I have sent for food; and it will be here directly," answered Rosalind cheeringly, tears falling on the shrivelled hand she held. "Do, Michael dear, go after the girl—you can run quicker than she can."

"You are a good, kind soul," said her

brother, leaving the hut, for it scarcely deserved the name of cottage, to execute her commission.

"How goes on your cookery, Wyvill? Let me give the potatoes a stir," cried Richard, trying to poke them with the light cane he carried.

"Leave them alone! This is no time or place for folly. Look at that wretched half starved woman, sinking beneath age and poverty, and humble yourself in gratitude that your lot is not as hers," answered Rupert sternly, the jesting tone of the heartless young man awakening his disgust.

"Nonsense! poor people always grow old," muttered Richard Weston, as he turned away, abashed but not repentant.

"Here is a potatoe, which I think might be eaten," said Rupert taking the smallest out of the fire, and placing it without a thought for his fingers, which were burnt in the operation, on a broken plate that stood on the table.

"Bread would be better for her," observed

Rosalind, but as the girl was not in sight, and the old woman still murmured the word food, and appeared faint from long fasting, it was decided that the bread should not be waited for.

With the aid of an old knife, Rupert peeled the potatoe; and it was fearful to see the eagerness with which the starving woman clutched it with her long, thin fingers, and thrust it into her mouth.

"Poor thing! Poor thing!" said Mr. Adnam turning away to conceal a tear.

"Poor thing indeed!" repeated Edred Cottrell, who had hitherto continued silent, watching Rosalind.

Rupert said nothing; but he stood by Rosalind's side ready to take the plate, and when she turned to give it him, she saw that there were tears in his eyes, and her own fell the faster.

"More to eat! more to eat!" murmured the the old crone, holding out her hands in entreaty.

Rupert turned again to the fire, whilst Edred went to the door to look for Michael and the little girl. The rest of the party were all standing on the outside, Terry Weston and Miss Highworth never having ventured within a foot of the threshold.

"Here is some bread!" cried Edred entering with a loaf, which he had taken from Michael.

"Bread! bread!" clamoured the old woman in an eager tone, her appetite having been little appeased by the potatoe, stretching out her trembling hands to snatch it.

"And milk, and butter!" exclaimed the child in a shrill excited tone of joy, that showed how rare such luxuries had been of late.

"Milk and butter! Milk and butter!" repeated the crone, nodding her palsied head in imbecile delight.

The bread was crumbled into some milk; and the woman's wolfish look grew more human and gentle as her craving appetite was satisfied, whilst Rupert helped the child, who had only

eaten a little piece of bread as she ran along, to the same mess.

A neighbour entering soon after, the granny and her grandchild were consigned to her care for the present, Edred Cottrell, who chanced to be best provided with silver, leaving money to procure the food and raiment needful for both. On enquiry it appeared that the girl's father was a notorious poacher, against whom warrants were out, and who was supposed to be still lurking in the neighbourhood though his old mother could not or would not give any account of his haunts.

The party returned home pretty much in the same order in which it set out, except that Rosalind had Wyvill for her supporter on the right, whilst Mr. Adnam was jockeyed out of his station on her left by a manœuvre of Edred's, which said manœuvre ruffled the old gentleman's usual good temper. Rupert walked by Rosalind's side and her hand rested on his arm, but little conversation passed between

them, for Edred was in one of his merriest moods, so droll, so entertaining that it was impossible not to listen and be amused, and almost as impossible to answer or check the current of his speech, his words flowed on so uninterruptedly.

"Where have you been walking to?" asked Mrs. Sewell of Richard Weston, who was the first to enter the drawing room.

He hesitated an instant whether to mention the old woman, then, fancying that Wyvill might proclaim his levity, he thought it best to tell the tale himself, and give his own version of the story.

"We wandered about through the shrubbery and wood, and came home by the Hawthorn Dell, where we had a capital scene!—Wyvill carrying water for a ragged girl, and roasting potatoes for her grandmother, an old witch."

"Carrying water—and roasting potatoes!" exclaimed Mrs. Sewell in surprise.

"Yes, all! And a capital scene was not it?" said Richard appealing to Miss Bailey.

"Yes, very good indeed!—the poet laureate roasting potatoes! You cannot think how funny he looked crouching down before the fire. And then Rosalind crammed the old woman."

"Is this true, Mr. Wyvill?" asked Mrs. Sewell.

"Something like it," replied Rupert in his usual quiet manner.

"But how came it all about? Did you do it for a bet?"

"It is a long story, and not worth telling."

"I should like to hear it nevertheless," said Mrs. Denham.

"I will tell you then, my dear madam, since Wyvill seems little inclined to speak, from modesty I suppose he being the hero of the tale," answered Edred Cottrell. "To begin at the beginning then—I know you like a relation to be circumstantial—as we were crossing the

hall a letter was placed in Wyvill's hand with the intimation that the bearer waited for an answer. It was directed in a pretty feminine hand—of course such missives must be attended to—I spare his blushes and say no more.

"He said he would follow, and we asked no questions. On we rambled here and there, hither and thither, backwards and forwards, through your beautiful woods, till we all longed to be transformed into Dryads and Hamadryads, shepherds and shepherdesses; and all sorts of ruralities. At last, just as we reached the edge of the steep above Hawthorn Dell, what should we see but a little girl blubbering for the loss of her pitcher, which had fallen into the stream. Some persons troubled with a superfluity of cleanliness might have thought it no great harm had she fallen in herself, and thus endured an involuntary washing—not so a poetical person—dirt and rags are undoubtedly picturesque. Well, whilst this picturesque child was blubbering over the lost pitcher, who

should come bounding down the glen but Wyvill, in the very contrary direction to that in which we had come, now I think of it—I suppose he meant to follow the Irish fashion and overtake us by meeting us. What will the poet laureate do? was the general speculation; so we watched his movements from behind some bushes. He stopped and listened to the child's tale of romantic misery. Had it been an older and fairer damsel he would doubtless have plunged into the stream at once, but, being only a ragged girl with a pinched mouth and turn up nose, he set to work more philosophically, and cut a stick with a crook at the end wherewith he fished up the pitcher without dimming the lustre of his new coat. Here a common-place person might have ended the adventure—but Rupert Wyvill is an uncommon-place person—so finding that the girl tottered beneath the weight of the pitcher, which he had filled for her, he even played Aquarius himself, performing the office

with that elegant dot and go one motion, with the other arm stuck out for a balance, so invariably exhibited by water carriers—as thus :" —here Edred performed the dot and go one motion he had described, with the projecting arm on the opposite side so inimitably, that even Mrs. Denham was lured into a something beyond a smile; and most of her guests laughed outright. "Thus on he trudged, the ragged child trotting close by his side, looking for all the world like the hero of a moral fairy tale, till he reached a hovel moulded out of mud, romantic from its rudeness and ugliness quite a poetical concern. The 'Open Sesame' was said—the door unclosed—then closed again, shutting Aquarius and his attendant merchild from our view. '*La curiosité est la source de toutes les connoisances,*' as the copy has it; so on rushed the party down the steep descent like a herd of buffaloes towards the cottage, at the window of which as many as could find standing room stationed themselves, to witness

the conclusion of the sorceries, which had already transformed the dignified Rupert Wyvill, the poet laureate of the morning, into a pitcher bearer; and most poetical and picturesque was the scene that met our view—quite like a description in a novel. There were rugged walls, and rugged floor—a rude table with two legs and a half—a stool à la tripod—part of a plate—three quarters of a cup, and, in a dark corner, an original shaped couch, called by the vulgar a bed—not French—not English—but after a fashion of its own—from Fairy-land no doubt; and on it an aged crone, blear-eyed, and pallid, according to the proper novel receipt, who moaned and muttered, and waving her shrivelled hands, poured forth questions and lamentations in a melodramatic manner. Besides all this, which was very romantic, there was a broad open fire-place with two bricks to stand for dogs; and some ashes with wet sticks above to stand for a fire; and before these ashes and wet sticks was Rupert Wyvill, the stately,

philosophical Rupert Wyvill, crouching down puffing away like the bellows in a forge, with cheeks distended like a trumpeting cherub in a country church, striving to create a flame, which he found a more difficult task in wet wood, than in gentle woman, the latter being by far the most inflammable material of the two. I wish you could have seen him, Mrs. Denham; it was better than a christmas pantomime. Down went his head to the right to bring his breath to bear on a promising ember. Puff! Puff! Puff! The wood did not blaze, but the ashes flew up into his mouth, nose, and eyes. Then came a sputtering and sneezing, and coughing, and making of faces, and rubbing of eyes," continued Edred, acting all he described with admirable exactness and humour. " A less persevering spirit would have been discouraged; but Rupert Wyvill never yields to circumstances, so down went the head on the left side. Puff! Puff! Puff! Then came the same sputtering, and rubbing ; and

then down went his head just in the middle. Puff! Puff! Puff! And the artist's skill was rewarded, for a tiny flame, like a serpent's tongue, shot up through the hissing, crackling sticks. Here the old crone began to call for something to drink, and *faute de mieux*, the little girl prepared to give her grandmother—it has always been a grandmother in these sort of adventures, from Little Red Riding Hood downwards—a draught of water from the spring. Wyvill had rescued an empty pitcher carried a full one—and puffed and puffed till he had raised a blaze; and these feats would have contented an unambitious person—but Wyvill was desirous of proving himself an Admirable Crichton, capable of doing all things; so, seeing that the child's hands shook, he took the heavy pitcher under his own command. Down poured the water slap-dash, not into the child's cup, but into Wyvill's boot, who was startled by the unexpected shower bath into performing two or three

entrechats. Some doctors maintain that you cannot feel hunger and thirst at the same time; but this old crone is evidence against them. No sooner had she drunk than she wanted to eat—she was hungry—starving—had touched nothing but three turnips for the last week; and the girl, like a dutiful grand-daughter, confirmed granny's assertion. The old woman looked wolfish—the girl looked famished—and Wyvill the very model of sympathy. Had they nothing in the house? The girl dragged out some potatoes—stolen she admitted—and Wyvill poked them into the embers. Whether she tempted him to overlook the guilt of theft, and become an accessary after the act, by offer- him a share of the plunder, I cannot say; but certain it is that he uttered none of those moral aphorisms on the occasion for which he is so justly celebrated, but, on the contrary, in such haste was he to rule the roast that he burnt his fingers in the attempt, and capered about in such a ludicrous style, wringing his

hands, and making wry faces that Richard burst into a boisterous laugh, and thus, by betraying our proximity, put an end to the interesting scene."

"Yes it was an interesting scene! a capital scene! and you have hit him off to the life!" cried Richard, indulging in a second hearty laugh at Edred's admirable representation of a person capering about under the torture of burnt fingers.

Nor was his laugh the only laugh; it was echoed by most of the party; even Rosalind, though highly provoked, could not quite subdue a smile, and Wyvill himself joined in the general mirth. Mr. Adnam was the only person who maintained a determined gravity.

"This is too bad!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Turning humanity into ridicule. Stop this foolery, Wyvill! You should have interfered before."

"Let him have his run, my dear sir; Cottrell is such an accomplished story teller that it

would be cruel to check him in a display of his talent."

"Have I said anything but the truth?" questioned Edred with unusual sharpness, ill pleased, as it seemed, with the remark, though the speaker's tone was very calm.

"A mere outline is scarcely worth looking at—all know that it is the colouring—the lights and shadows thrown over that outline which give it force, rendering it pleasing or displeasing. You are a skilful artist—colour highly; and I have no doubt will become very popular," answered Rupert in the same quiet tone.

"Rather a wretched caricaturist! a vile dauber, only suited to low tastes!" exclaimed Mr. Adnam fretfully. "I do not think anything could put you in a passion, Wyvill, since you bear this folly, and worse than folly—malice, so placidly."

"If folly, it is not worthy of provoking passion."

"But if malice?" questioned Mr. Adnam looking angrily at Edred.

"I defy and despise it," replied Rupert loftily.

"Psha, Wyvill! that is one of your high notions. A wasp, mean as it is, can sting."

"And may be crushed—trod under foot," said Wyvill with a falcon glance at Edred, but yet no heat of tone.

A gust of passion swept across Cottrell's features;—it was gone, and had left no trace; —no eyes had marked it but Rosalind's and Rupert's.

"I hope you do not mean to call me a wasp, Mr. Adnam—a troublesome, busy, stinging insect," said Edred with a good-humoured smile.

"Yes, I do," replied Mr. Adnam doggedly. "Your tongue is like a wasp's sting—you can always get a laugh on your side; and you would jest on your grandmother to do that."

"I never heard of a wasp's getting a laugh

on his side, and jesting on his grandmother; and as for the sting of my tongue—Wyvill did not quarrel with what I said, therefore why should you?"

"Wyvill is growing as indolent as an East Indian Octogenarian," said Mr. Adnam pettishly.

"I beg your pardon, Wyvill, for getting you rebuked," observed Edred gaily.

"Never show any delicacy on that point, but follow out your own plans without thinking of me," replied Wyvill rather significantly.

"That is another of your lofty notions. You will allow yourself to be crossed in all your hopes, and learn wisdom when too late," cried Mr. Adnam in vexation. "Why not check impertinence at once?"

"Impertinence, Mr. Adnam! I hope you do not mean to say that I showed impertinence to Wyvill in my relation; I thought I had painted his heroism and humanity in glowing

colours, and if you had not stopped me I should have told how he roasted the potatoes, and peeled the potatoes, and helped cram the old woman and child."

"What do you call that but impertinence?" asked Mr. Adnam, the more provoked, as he saw that the good-tempered gaiety of his adversary won him favor with all his hearers. "People run after a laugh as hens after a cackle."

"Do you mean to call mine a cock and bull story? Laughing is wholesome: laugh and grow fat they say. Now the ladies pronounce me too thin, so I laugh upon principle, or vanity—which you choose."

"Had the woman nothing but Mr. Wyvill's roasted potatoes to eat?" asked Mrs. Denham; not to judge from her monotonous tone that she took an interest in the question, but simply because, being weary of Mr. Adnam's fretfulness, she sought to turn the conversation.

"Oh, yes! Rosalind like a ministering

angel, gave the child money to buy bread; and my pockets boasting most silver, I deposited a further supply with a neighbour for their use. I wish you could have seen Rosalind, Mrs. Denham, with her tearful eyes, and silver tones so full of pity, soothing that wretched old woman into hope and patience; and then giving her the food which her forethought had provided, with such touching gentleness—such anxious attention. Were I poet or painter I would depict the scene, and bequeath it to posterity as a reality more beautiful than the most beautiful of fictions."

All looked amazed at this change of tone, this sudden burst of feeling and admiration; and none more so than Rosalind herself and Mr. Adnam, who muttered between his teeth—"Then the fellow can feel."

"What is the old woman's name?" asked Mrs. Denham, making no remark on his praise of Rosalind.

"Hester Darley, I think her neighbour said."

"Her son is reported to be one of the worst characters in the county; and the mother is supposed to uphold him in his wickedness. There is a warrant out against him now for stealing my wood; and he has more of my game than I have," remarked Mrs. Denham.

"Indeed! I would not have left her any money if I had known that," cried Edred quickly.

"I will repay you," observed Rosalind with equal quickness.

"I am sure you would not encourage any one that has behaved ill to Mrs. Denham," said Mrs. Sewell, with a warning frown to Rosalind, which warning frown was, as usual, unheeded by her for whose guidance it was intended.

"And I am sure that had Mrs. Denham been present she would have forgotten the woman's guilt—thought only of her hunger, and left

money as we did," answered Rosalind warmly.

"I always make many enquiries before I judge or give," observed Mrs. Denham with more than her wonted coldness.

"So much for Mrs. Denham's warm heart!" thought Rosalind, looking as indignant as she felt, though she merely said, "I could not stay to judge a starving woman."

"Ah! my dear, you are young and hot-headed, but your heart is in the right place; you always mean well, and will learn more prudence in time," observed Mrs. Sewell in a grand fuss at Rosalind's defiance, as she termed it, of Mrs. Denham, who made no reply to her last remark, but turning to Miss Highworth, expressed a hope that she had enjoyed her walk.

"I could not do otherwise," answered that young lady. "The grounds are very beautiful, and I longed for a horse that I might see more of them, not being a very good walker."

"There is a lady's horse in the stable, and

plenty of beaux to attend you," said Mrs. Denham, turning to the young men.

"I shall have great pleasure in attending Miss Highworth," observed Terry Weston, arranging his favorite curl as he spoke.

"By the bye, talking of horses, Wyvill, I have bad news for you," remarked his brother Richard. "You will have that bay you sold the other day returned on your hands—it is dead lame. Cottrell told you at the time that it was not sound."

"I do not always take for granted what Cottrell says, but judge for myself," replied Wyvill carelessly.

"Richard's information comes from Todd's man, which is pretty good authority," remarked Edred colouring.

"Very good authority as to his master's dishonorable intentions; but not as to the previous unsoundness of the horse."

"Oh, I cry your pardon! that is only my own opinion. But it is a pity you warranted

the horse, for since it has unluckily fallen lame the day after the sale, malicious people, and I am sorry to say that there are such in the world, may make ill-natured remarks."

"They may do as they please, I am aware that there are malicious people who delight in slander, but my character stands too high to be touched by the surmises or remarks of such."

"I congratulate you on having such a character; I would not subject myself to what may be surmised for something."

"Possibly not—Edred Cottrell and Rupert Wyvill are not the same."

Edred's eyes flashed fire, but his words showed no token of anger.

"Oh, no, thank goodness! you are too stately for me; one of the Ionic order, according to rule; whereas I am of the whimsy order, fancy bred. I should hush up the matter if I were you, and take back the horse. I daresay with a little firing and blistering it will sell for half price, or do for a common

hack. It is not pleasant to have one's honor called in question in a case of warranty."

"Certainly not, but to hush up the matter and take back the animal would be an admission that I had warranted as sound, what was in truth unsound. Young Todd got tipsy the night of the fair, and lamed his horse by taking a desperate leap, which he would never have attempted if sober; and now has the impudence to ask me to take it back, and return him the money. Had I known his character he should never have had the poor creature—I was assured that he made a good master."

"You will have to prove this in a court of justice, for he declares the case shall come on at the ensuing assizes, unless you compromise the matter before."

"I will make no compromise—he has had his answer."

"Of course it must be as you please, Wyvill; I only advise you for your own good."

"I appreciate your advice as it deserves.

My servant and others can prove the previous soundness; and there was a witness of the leap."

"As you please, I have a dread of law—its tediousness—its uncertainty—its expense," said Edred shrugging his shoulders. "Rosalind shall I pick you a nosegay?"

"Thank you, I have one," answered his cousin.

END OF VOL. I.

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